

CABBIES DRIVEN CRAZY

April 14-27, 1997

In THESE TIMES

Spring books

Barbara Garson we've been Taylorized!

Boris Kagarlitsky Russia's latest revolution

Salim Muwakkil demystifying the Nation of Islam

Daniel Lazare Jeffersonianism and its discontents

John Palattella tenureless radicals

Jennifer Schuessler Freud, feminism and hysteria

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EDITORIAL

AN ALTERNATIVE TO MANAGED CARE

After Clinton's bureaucratic health care plan crashed in 1993, insurance companies, with the support of the White House, promoted managed care as the nation's primary health care system. They touted this "privatized" system as a more efficient alternative to government-financed single-payer health care, such as the program Canada enjoys. With more bargaining power than traditional insurance companies vis-à-vis providers, the argument went, managed-care companies would root out unnecessary procedures and reduce medical costs. Now, almost four years later, managed care has become the dominant form of medical care, but it has benefited neither doctors nor their patients.

Offering cheaper premiums than traditional insurers, managed-care companies make profits by saving money on treatment. To the extent that this results in more efficient use of medical resources, it is all to the good. Unfortunately, these companies have cut a good deal more than fat; they've put restrictions on treatments that are both necessary and desirable. The most striking example is the one-day limit on hospital stays that many HMOs imposed on women giving birth or having a mastectomy. This policy had the ironic effect of dragging federal and state governments into the minutiae of health care management after all: Congress mandated at least a two-day stay for pregnancies (if both doctor and patient agree it's necessary), and a bill is pending that would do the same for mastectomies.

There is also evidence that instead of being more efficient, HMOs cause administrative costs to increase. This was reported last month in an article in the *New England Journal of Medicine* by Drs. Steffie Woolhandler and David Himmelstein, co-founders of Physicians for a National Health Program (PNHP). "Contrary to the rhetoric of the market, market forces are apparently 'upsizing' administration," they found in their survey of 6,000 hospitals. Administrative costs increased at for-profit hospitals from 31.8 percent of all expenses in 1990 to 34 percent in 1994. Similar increases were found at public hospitals, although their administrative costs are substantially lower than those

of the for-profits.

These findings point up the fantasy that Republican and Democratic leaders share about the relative inefficiency of Medicare and Medicaid. Plans to privatize Medicare by shifting seniors to HMOs would raise administrative costs from the present 2 cents to 4 cents of each premium dollar to more than 20 cents. That would result in the transfer of \$30 billion to \$40 billion a year from health services to the executives and shareholders of corporate HMOs.

Politicians of both parties have been loathe to promote health care plans since Clinton's disastrous 1993 effort. Yet the issue will not

go away, as mounting public outrage at HMO practices and the recent interventions against hospitals who practice one-day-and-out demonstrate. Doctors, too, are joining the ranks of HMO opponents, as insurance companies take decisions about treatment out of their hands.

As costs rise, service deteriorates and the ranks of the uninsured continue to grow, the plans for a single-payer system put forward by PNHP, if vigorously promoted by the left, will force their way into public debate and approval.

PNHP's proposal is modeled on the Canadian system of publicly financed private medicine. A health care card would entitle everyone to standard medical and mental-health care, nursing home or home care, and medical devices, as well as to dental services and prescription drugs, which the Canadian system does not cover. As in Canada, the program would be federally funded and state administered. Patients would go to the doctors or hospitals of their choice, and doctors would bill the state.

PNHP's proposal would set up health boards in each state to oversee the plan, to set medical policy and to negotiate fee schedules and overall budgets. The boards would be elected or appointed from the ranks of industry and consumers. Hospitals and nursing homes could remain privately owned and operated, but their finances would be radically simplified. In place of charges for each bandage and aspirin, they would negotiate an overall lump-sum budget with the National Health Program state board to cover all operating costs. Regional NHP boards would also rationalize capital expenditures for new buildings and equipment, thereby eliminating the duplication of very expensive high-technology devices that now unnecessarily drives costs up.

In short, the PNHP plan would rationalize and universalize our health care system without interfering in the professional activities of doctors or hospitals. Although this would require large federal expenditures, the overall cost of medical care would be stabilized and directed to treatment, not to profit or administrative waste. ◀

*Mounting
evidence shows
that managed
care is neither
humane nor
efficient.*

IN THESE TIMES

"...with liberty and justice for all"

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InTHESETIMES

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LETTERS

Money laundering

Your March 17 editorial, "Electoral reform that will work," took an odd approach to campaign-finance reform, especially in light of Joel Bleifuss' article "Reforming the beast" (June 24, 1996), which is a solid primer on the "Clean Money, Clean Elections" approach being embraced by reformers around the country.

For starters, where did you get the idea that, under a public financing system, "the process of deciding which candidates are to receive money would be immensely complex" and controlled by those with an interest "in funding those candidates acceptable to the establishment?" As Bleifuss pointed out, under the Clean Elections Act passed by Maine's voters last November, candidates who agreed to forgo all private funding would qualify for "clean money" by collecting a set number of \$5 contributions and signed expressions of support from voters. Determining who qualified would be a

pretty simple matter—certainly no more bureaucratic than the current system of giving federal matching funds to qualifying presidential candidates.

Second, if a central goal of reform, which we share with you, is to "raise the level of political discourse or public education on the issues," then why do you question the obvious value of putting a clean-money floor under all candidates who choose to participate in such a public financing system? The main reason democratic debate is so limited in America is that most challengers to established incumbent politicians can't raise the funds they need to speak effectively to the voters except by going to the same old dominant special interests that now finance most campaigns. The problem is not the plethora of 30-second TV ads, but the purse-strings behind those ads. (You wouldn't argue that magazines like *In These Times* should only run 30-page articles—no matter how edifying—and forgo shorter items aimed at readers with less leisure time for

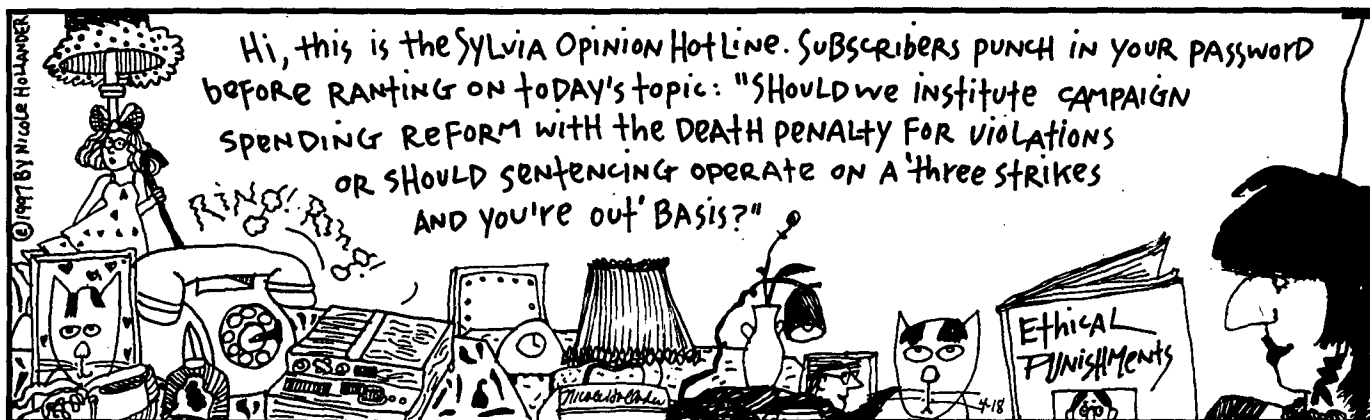
politics, would you?)

The "free TV" proposal that you tout has many of the problems you mistakenly ascribe to full public financing, without any of the benefits. (For example, which government bureaucrat will decide who gets the best slots of airtime?) Most important, it is not free. The "Free TV for Straight Talk Coalition" estimates it will cost the broadcast industry \$500 million every two years in displaced ad revenues. The coalition properly points out that the airwaves are a public trust and that we should insist broadcasters give something back in exchange for their licenses. But as you admit, it will "entail a fierce political struggle" to get them to do this. The "Clean Money, Clean Elections" bill now being drafted by Sens. John Kerry, Paul Wellstone and others, which is modeled on the Maine initiative, also includes free and discounted TV for qualifying candidates. Why not struggle for this kind of comprehensive reform, instead of a partial measure that avoids some central issues? Nothing in your proposal prevents free TV from becoming yet another public subsidy to privately financed candidates—one by which, as in presidential elections, candidates first raise megabucks from fat cats and then collect taxpayer-financed goodies on top of that.

If someone's going to buy the politicians, it might as well be the citizenry. No reform is a panacea, but it is pointless to push piecemeal steps that fail to

SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander



break the connection between special-interest funders and the public servants they buy. Clean Money Campaign Reform is the best approach we've got.

Micah L. Sifry
Public Campaign
Washington, D.C.

Editor's reply: A partial mea culpa. Yes, full public financing of federal elections would be a big step in the right direction—assuming it covered primary election contests as well as third-party candidates, and included clear, minimal standards for eligibility. In These Times has always supported such legislation and regrets any implication to the contrary in the editorial.

However, the degradation of political interest and intelligence, which owes much to television advertising, is a more serious problem than Micah Sifry seems willing to acknowledge. Thirty-second spots designed to pander to media-created opinions and prejudices serve only to confuse or turn off potential voters, especially those who do not assiduously follow the course of public events and policy development. Raising the level of political discourse and of public education on the underlying principles and policies of government is a pressing need. True democracy cannot exist without an informed citizenry, as democratic theorists going back to Thomas Jefferson have repeatedly pointed out. And the fact is that we do not have an informed citizenry, at least in part because 30-second spots—which keep serious public policy issues out of sight and mind—are one of the main sources of information available both to voters and to the majority who don't bother to vote in most elections.

Sifry says it is untrue that free airtime for sustained political discussion would cost the public nothing, but he's wrong. Free time would cost giant media companies something in lost revenues, but so what? (Public financing, in contrast, could amount to a corporate bonanza.) The airwaves belong to us all, yet we derive little social benefit from their current use. Meanwhile, the

corporations to whom we grant free licenses make hundreds of millions, if not billions of dollars every year as a result of our free gift. Limiting the profits of these corporate giants in order to benefit us all is not only possible, but socially desirable.

As a people, we can set whatever conditions we deem appropriate for the use of public property. What could be more important in a democratic society than using one of our public resources to inform our own citizens?

Thirty-minute (or 15-minute) blocks of time, distributed to all candidates who meet reasonably defined levels of support, would open the political process to many candidates and groups now excluded from effective participation in the political life of our nation. Equally important, such blocks of time would allow for, if not require, intelligent, or at least sustained, discussion of issues, rather than the usual distortions, slanders and innuendos of 30-second soundbites. Real issues could be addressed and examined intelligently. A true diversity of views could be placed before the voters for a healthy change.

Sifry says that federal bureaucrats would be needed to decide who gets the best slots, but that could be decided simply by drawing lots. He also suggests that free airtime would function as another subsidy to privately financed candidates, and in this he is correct, at least in the absence of the kind of public financing he and Public Campaign advocate. Even so, it would be less corrupting than the current system, because it would eliminate the cost of TV advertising, which is by far the biggest expense for most campaigns.

Public financing and free airtime are not contradictory. Both should be supported.

Two, three, many Vietnams

In "What we learned in Vietnam" (March 3), Ron Ridenhour closes his review with what the United States did in Central America, but he confines himself to the Reagan-Bush era. In

truth, what we did to the people of Vietnam was just a continuation of policies going back at least to the turn of the century.

In 1935, Maj. Gen. Smedley D. Butler, in a book about his career in the Marine Corps, stated, "I helped make Mexico and especially Tampico safe for American oil interests in 1914. ... I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street."

The list of countries bullied by the United States is too long for a letter. The United States occupied Nicaragua from 1912 to 1933, except for short intervals. It then installed the Somoza dictatorship, which lasted 45 years. In a CIA-led operation, Guatemala's democratically elected government was overthrown in 1954. For 30 years afterward, Guatemala was ruled by a series of murderous dictators. More than 100,000 Guatemalans were killed during these years. In Chile, a U.S.-backed insurrection overthrew the elected government of Salvador Allende and installed the dictator Pinochet. We have dominated Cuba ever since the Spanish-American War in 1898. When Castro overthrew the Batista dictatorship in 1959, replaced it with his own dictatorship and confiscated American property, we did everything we could to destroy him, inflicting more harm on the Cubans in the process.

Vietnam was part of a century of U.S. domination over small countries, a domination of immeasurable brutality.

James J. Billings
Del Rio, Texas

Corrections

"The Wal-Mart of hospitals" (March 3) incorrectly identified Thomas Frist, vice chair at Columbia/HCA Healthcare Corp., as the company's founder. Frist co-founded Hospital Corporation of America (HCA), which merged with Columbia Healthcare Corp. in 1994.

Due to an editing error, we misreported Minister Benjamin Chavis Muhammad's age in "Answering the call" (March 31). He is 49 years old.

InSHORT



Hidden injuries of NAFTA

There are two stories about Kate Bronfenbrenner's study of how plant closings—or the threat of them—affect workers trying to organize unions. The first story is the study itself, whose findings astonished even Bronfenbrenner, director of labor education research at Cornell University's School of Industrial Labor Relations. "All of us know employers go to great lengths to stop unions," she said. "But it was worse than I'd thought." In the 525 organizing campaigns she surveyed, more than 50 percent of employers threatened to stop operations during a union drive. Worse, when unions won their elections, 15 percent of companies shut their doors within two years—three times the rate tallied in a study of plant closings in the late '80s.

line, shrink-wrapped it and loaded it on flatbed trucks with bright pink signs that read "Mexico Transfer Job." The union lost the election.

Company threats to close plants were higher among mobile industries, such as manufacturing, than among businesses less able to pick up and move, such as retailing—62 percent compared to 36 percent. Threats were also more common from businesses with annual revenues of more than \$100 million. Despite the frequency of tactics such as ITT Automotive's, Bronfenbrenner found that just one-third of unions filed unfair labor practice charges with the National Labor Relations Board. Most did not file because they felt they didn't have a strong case or because they had

Then there's the story of what happened in September, when Bronfenbrenner submitted her final report in all its grisly detail to the Labor Secretariat of the Commission for Labor Cooperation, the agency that commissioned it. The commission, a trinational body set up under the labor side agreements of NAFTA, funded Bronfenbrenner and 12 other researchers to contribute to a larger report called "Plant Closings and Workers' Rights." The labor departments of Mexico, Canada and the United States were to review the report and submit their comments, and then it was to be released publicly.

But nearly three months after her study was finished, it was still stalled at the review stage. "I started hearing in December—off the record—that the U.S. Labor Department thinks my report was too anti-business and they didn't want it released," Bronfenbrenner said. "They were worried it could hamper efforts to expand NAFTA to Chile." Congress will soon consider proposals to fast-track trade-negotiating authority beyond North America, and Bronfenbrenner believes her study provides ammunition to opponents. "My conclusion is that NAFTA has created a climate that emboldened employers and terrified workers," she said.

One of the most dramatic anecdotes Bronfenbrenner's study recounts is of a United Auto Workers campaign at ITT Automotive in Michigan in 1994. Management took apart an assembly

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no faith in the NLRB.

Bob Zachariasiewicz, a spokesperson for the U.S. Labor Department's Bureau of International Labor Affairs, denied any political problems with Bronfenbrenner's research and said the review process was no longer than usual. He said the department's final comments on the report were submitted February 8 to the Labor Secretariat and have to do with its structure, not content. While he would not comment on the report until it was released, Zachariasiewicz said that "the Bureau doesn't believe the report will produce any relevant or conclusive evidence related to NAFTA or its expansion. The question of plant closings or threats of closings are questions of U.S. labor law. That is handled by the NLRB."

The Labor Department may be unenthusiastic about Bronfenbrenner's findings, but organized labor is getting a boost from it. "This study has given a kick in the ass to other unions that had conceded NAFTA," said Paul Boldin, the Teamsters' research director. The Teamsters contributed several thousand dollars to Bronfenbrenner's research, Boldin said. "The AFL-CIO is now getting together to attack the fast-tracking of NAFTA to Chile," Boldin added. "We're all happy to see President Sweeney taking this on."

—Annette Fuentes

Hayden fever not contagious

Though he was elected while the embers from the Los Angeles riot were still warm, you'd believe from Mayor Richard Riordan's programs that South-Central rose up solely to protest high business fees. Aggressively pro-business, the multimillionaire Republican has invested his political capital in a handful of proposed development projects—from airport expansion and a new sports arena to Steven Spielberg's mammoth Dreamworks studio—that will require massive public subsidy, but that promise little change in the lives of L.A.'s bottom half.

Meanwhile, Riordan has vetoed a living-wage ordinance (although the city council will override him), allowed the post-riot Rebuild L.A. organization to implode, and connived at both the immigrant-bashing Proposition 187 and the anti-affirmative action Proposition 209. In short, in a city that is increasingly nonwhite, Riordan's distance from common people should have made him a ripe target for a liberal challenger.

Nonetheless, most observers expect Riordan to win the April 8 ballot handily. His only serious challenger, state Sen. Tom Hayden, has run as a gadfly rather than as a serious candidate. That's a pity, because Hayden's platform is truly an alternative to the mayor's. Instead of massive new development, Hayden wants individual neighborhoods to have power over growth and zoning. He's willing to put the environment above corporate profit. He's pro-labor. He understands the consequences of the great demographic

Continued on page 8

APPALL-O-METER

THE IN THESE TIMES INDEX OF INDECENCIES



By David Futrella

Let them eat textbooks 8.3

In the midst of a recent debate over the effects of poverty and hunger on students of Washington state schools, state Sen. Harold Hochstatter declared that maybe hunger wasn't such a bad thing for the kids after all—well-fed kids might just fall asleep in class, like Grandpa after a Thanksgiving dinner. "We hear about hungry children all the time," the *Bremerton Sun* quoted him as saying. "But I know after I have had a big meal, I am falling asleep in my chair during (Senate) meetings. I need some coffee just to concentrate." Perhaps all the kids really need is a daily fix of Jolt cola to replace those oh-so-stodgy school milk programs.

Old Sparky 8.9

Cruel and unusual punishment? Yeah, we can do that for you. After 6-inch flames erupted from the head of an inmate strapped into "Old Sparky," Florida's antique electric chair, officials admitted there might just be a problem with the equipment. But Florida Attorney General Bob Butterworth said the fiery death of convicted murderer Pedro Medina had a bright side: It would serve as a warning to others contemplating crimes. "People who wish to commit murder, they better not do it in the state of Florida, because we may have a problem with our electric chair," an unapologetic Butterworth told the press.



Flatware in peril! 8.2

It's good to know the State Department has its priorities straight. As civil war flared in Albania in early March, American embassy officials in Tirana were ordered to ... keep an eye on the silverware, the *Washington Post* reports. In a "priority" cable from Washington ("Subject: safeguarding of sterling flatware"), the American ambassador was informed of the proper State Department policy for unfortunate silverware caught up in international emergencies. "Posts in departure status should consider safeguarding sterling silver flatware at the official residence in question or in the chancery, whichever post considers safer," the cable explained. "IDF [Interior Design and Furnishings division] encourages post to take whatever means necessary to safeguard the sterling."

Stunned by a stupid statement? Nauseated by a noxious news story? Contact the Appall-O-Meter, c/o In These Times, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647. Please enclose a copy of the appalling item.

shift underway in L.A. And his understanding of racial politics is several light years ahead of Riordan's.

During his 15 years in the California legislature, Hayden has been an indefatigable defender of the state's higher education system and a paragon of financial incorruptibility. In the L.A. mayoral race, however, he has succumbed to two other, less noble trademarks: hubris and opportunism. Why didn't Hayden get around to announcing his candidacy until December? Nobody can figure it out, other than to conclude that he arrogantly believed his name recognition would propel him to victory. Equally baffling is his transparent pandering to white, middle-class voters, who mostly abhor him. At one news conference, Hayden, decked out preposterously in a Dodger uniform, blamed Riordan for letting the O'Malley family sell off the team.

Hayden would have done better to listen to his own rhetoric. As he has pointed out, L.A. is now two distinct cities. One of them will re-elect Dick Riordan. Hayden's only chance would have been to have started months ago—a year ago, probably—the daunting, back-breaking work of registering tens of thousands of new voters. That would have shored up his natural constituencies.

In fairness to Hayden, the Democratic machinery has made his campaign more difficult. While the local party has formally endorsed him, the operatives who ran Bill Clinton's California campaign are now managing Riordan. Meanwhile, Sen. Dianne Feinstein, one of the state's most powerful Democrats, is also out campaigning for Riordan.

Even if he had hunkered down to more serious political spade work, Hayden still would have been betrayed by high-level Democrats. But he might have prevented two of Riordan's most spectacular coups: last November's endorsement by 30 prominent African-Americans and last month's endorsement (later withdrawn) by the Los Angeles County Labor Federation.

Ethical diversity

THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION AND THE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION Society of New York are working closely with the Burmese State Law and Order Restoration Council, or SLORC, to establish nature reserves in Burma. The *Observer* of London reported on March 23 that the sites for the reserves, one of which will be the largest in the world, are being cleared of all humans through the "systematic slaughter of the Karen ethnic minority." According to the *Observer*, "The ruling Burmese junta is delighted to have the support from such prestigious organizations. They hope the reserves ... will attract millions of tourists and improve Burma's appalling international image, shaped by one of the worst human rights records in the world." At the Wildlife Conservation Society, Josh Ginsberg, the group's science director, told the *Observer*: "We do not sanction forced relocation or killings, but we have no control over the government. We are in Burma because it is one of the highest biodiversity countries." As for the Smithsonian, it issued this statement: "We are there to do important conservation work. We may disagree with a regime, but it is not our place to challenge it." —Joel Bleifuss

Having raised barely a tenth of Riordan's war chest and way behind in the polls, Hayden has started an 11th-hour bus tour. He could have done that months ago, along with more aggressive fundraising. Instead, he has squandered much of his energy—and image—in almost daily news conferences that nitpick Riordan. This strategy makes Hayden look more like a crank than a visionary—and makes Riordan ever more secure as L.A.'s mayor for another four years.

—Marc Cooper

Russian rumblings

On March 27, millions of angry workers and their supporters struck and demonstrated in cities across Russia, demanding immediate government action to pay back wages, preserve jobs and restore social services.

The general strike—Russia's first in 80 years—was called

Burmese day trips

CORPORATE AMERICA HAS COME UP WITH A NEW, BEHIND-THE-SCENES WAY TO LOBBY MEMBERS OF CONGRESS: A company gives lots of dollars to a tax-exempt foundation, which in turn takes members of Congress on foreign educational junkets that promote the company's business. Jim Drinkard of The Associated Press reports that last fall, four Republican House members—Majority Whip Tom DeLay of Texas, Dennis Hastert of Illinois, Bill Paxon of New York and Deborah Pryce of Ohio—went to Burma courtesy of the Asia Pacific Exchange Foundation in Washington, D.C. Once in Burma, the four representatives went on a fact-finding mission to the oil pipeline being built by Unocal and Burma's military dictators. Asia Pacific Exchange did not set up meetings with opposition leaders, however, because the Republicans expressed no interest in doing so, according to foundation President Richard Quick. The visit was front-page news in the junta-controlled press. While the foundation refuses to discuss which corporations give it money, Unocal admits it contributes, though it won't say how much. Last year, the foundation sent a group of congressional aides to China to visit an auto factory and the Boeing-China airplane plant. Boeing and Ford both contribute to the Asia Pacific Exchange Foundation. —J.B.

by the 50 million-member Federation of Independent Trade Unions (FNPR) and backed by virtually all Russian workers groups and most political parties. Even President Boris Yeltsin admitted that the protest was "largely justified," and the Orthodox Church extended "moral support."

The Russian government admits that the country's financial situation is dire, and that public-sector workers and employees in heavy industry are suffering terribly. About half of all Russian factories lost money in 1996, and the profitability of another third is considered dubious. As many as one in three Russian workers has gone without a salary for at least 3 months, due to the government's tight monetary policies and the virtual collapse of normal economic relations in many regions of the country. The total unpaid wage bill now stands at a whopping \$9 billion, with nearly \$3 billion more owed to the nation's pensioners.

This winter has seen an unprecedented number of wildcat stoppages by chronically unpaid public-sector employees. Some of these have turned confrontational—unusual for Russia's traditionally placid and long-suffering work force—or taken the form of long and grueling hunger strikes.

An opinion poll taken shortly before the nationwide March protest found that 53 percent of Russians supported its goals. But only a fraction of the expected 17 million demonstrators showed up, leading some Russian observers to bemoan the habitual resignation of their compatriots.

"Everybody is furious with the government and wishes lightning would strike the Kremlin, but nobody thinks there is anything they can do personally to make things change," said Tatyana Dimitreva, a trade-union organizer from Ivanovo. "To most people, politics is a source of misery, not a way to improve things."

Alexander Shurligin, a worker in a bankrupt Moscow shoe factory, said he hasn't received wages in 7 months. "There is no hope, and marching in front of the Kremlin isn't going to change that," Shurligin said. "I supported economic reform because I believed it would create good jobs, where a man could work and earn and support his family in a dignified way. What we got is the destruction of everything. It's really too late now."

Nobody in Moscow really knows how desperate the situation may be in some of Russia's hardest-hit regions, or when and where millions of hungry workers might reach the breaking point. Some people fear that if positive changes do not begin soon, popular rage could explode into revolution, as

has happened at previous low points in Russian history.

Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, who described the March 27 protests as "a vivid indication of the acuteness of the accumulated problems," promised to pay off by July all public-sector salaries in arrears, and to solve the financial crisis by the end of this year. Despite such conciliatory posturing, the government left nothing to chance during last month's protest, mobilizing tens of thousands of special riot police—16,000 in Moscow alone—to contain any unexpected outbursts from the crowds.

"In this country there is the state and there is the people, with virtually no institutions standing between them to mediate," said independent political analyst Nikolai Zyubov. "In the eyes of the leaders, the people are a seething, unpredictable mass to be controlled by all means. But also to be deeply feared."

—Fred Weir

CONTRIBUTORS

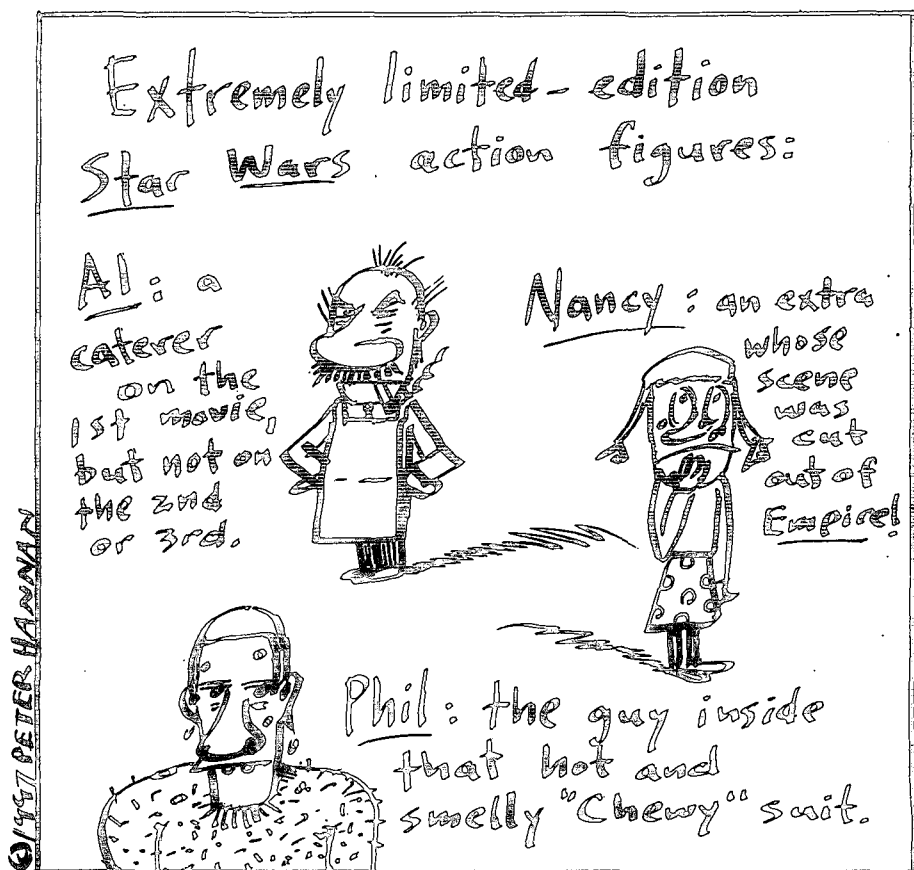
Annette Fuentes is editor of *Crítica: A Journal of Puerto Rican Policy and Politics* in New York.

Marc Cooper is a contributing editor to *The Nation*.

Joe Sacco ("The Rise and Fall of Palestine," page 10) is a comics writer in New York and author of the series *Palestine* (Fantagraphics).

THE ADVENTURES OF A HUGE MOUTH

By Peter Hannan



THE BIG PICTURE

NORMAN G. FINKELSTEIN'S 'The Rise and Fall of Palestine'

A BOOK
REVIEW
by Joe
Sacco
© 1997

Every morning paper brings fresh evidence that the Oslo Accord—Arafat's "Peace of the Brave"—has done anything but advance the Palestinian cause...



Supporters of Palestinian aspirations will find little to buoy up their spirits in Norman G. Finkelstein's "The Rise and Fall of Palestine," but I highly recommend this work as both a moving personal account and a sobering analysis of the intifada years and their aftermath.

THE RISE AND FALL OF PALESTINE by NORMAN G. FINKELSTEIN; UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA PRESS.

In the winter of '91-'92, when I was traveling in the Occupied Territories, the uprising against the Israelis was clearly sputtering.



Finkelstein traces the intifada and this eventual loss of steam through the lives of several West Bank Palestinians whom he visited periodically between mid-1988 and early 1994.

Exhaustion, frustration and brutal Israeli countermeasures all took their toll on the Palestinians Finkelstein met. But beyond providing a litany of their grievances, he emphasizes their humanity by taking us into their homes.



Some Palestinians treat Finkelstein, an American Jew, tentatively at first, but as we read on he develops deep bonds with several individuals.

Although Finkelstein clearly sees Israel's relationship to the Palestinians as that between oppressor and oppressed, he sometimes undergoes agonizing bouts of self-examination when his Jewishness becomes an issue.



For example, he believes "unequivocally" that every occupied people has the right to armed resistance, but admits feeling "very uneasy" at the prospect of "giving the benediction of a Jew for killing other Jews." Such frames of reference "tribalize" the principle, he says, and do "seem like a kind of self-loathing."

J. SACCO 1997

by Joe Sacco

In a chapter titled "Why Palestinians Cheered the Scud Missiles," he examines the Palestinian desire for retribution (which so rattled the American Gulf War consumer in the context of their enormous despair. "I wanted to see millions of rockets heading for Tel Aviv," a friend tells him. "I wanted to see the whole world destroyed. Including us." Most tellingly, Finkelstein quotes his mother, a survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto and the Nazi death camps.

She remembers Jews cheering the bombing of German cities, wanting the Russian aircraft "to destroy anything and everything German."

Elsewhere, Finkelstein writes, "Why should I have expected a more elevated morality from the Palestinians?..."

"I would hold Palestinians fast to my ethical standards only after Israel had removed its boot."

There is much more in Finkelstein's book to recommend it, including a hard-nosed critique of Arafat's deal with Israel. "Going beyond an official surrender," Finkelstein writes, "Arafat tendered the PLO's services as enforcer for the conquest regime."

WE LOST EVERYTHING BECAUSE EVERYONE WAS AGAINST US. EVEN OUR LEADERSHIP.

A FRIEND OF FINKELSTEIN

In his brilliant final chapter, Finkelstein draws painfully close parallels between the histories of the Cherokee and the Palestinian nations.

WE BEG LEAVE TO OBSERVE AND REMIND YOU THAT THE CHEROKEE ARE NOT FOREIGNERS BUT ORIGINAL INHABITANTS...

...AND THAT THE STATES BY WHICH THEY ARE NOW SURROUNDED HAVE BEEN CREATED OUT OF LAND THAT WAS ONCE THEIRS....

We know the fate of the Cherokee, and only recently have Americans acknowledged the scope of that injustice. Likewise, says Finkelstein, "Jews for many generations to come [will] have to bear the burden of Israel's merciless assault against the Palestinians." One hopes the future holds peace and real justice for the Palestinians; the victors' burden of guilt for the crushing of a people would be a sorry consolation.

THE FIRST STONE

APPEAL TO REASON

By Joel Bleifuss

I regularly question the decision I made a decade ago to make a career of alternative journalism. But just as often, something comes along that convinces me that it was the right choice, despite the poor pay, lack of retirement benefits and absence of job security that many of us endure.

Recently, three things have blown away my doubts about working in the alternative press: *Fear and Favor in the Newsroom*, a documentary video; *Corporate Media and the Threat to Democracy*, a pamphlet by Robert McChesney; and *Becoming Citizens in the Age of Television*, a book by David Thelen.

Fear and Favor in the Newsroom is an hour-long documentary by Bay-area filmmakers Beth Sanders and Randy Backer (distributed by California Newsreel in San Francisco). Narrated by Studs Terkel, the film recounts the stories of journalists from both the print and electronic media who were forced from their jobs for doing them a little too well. The film's message, delivered in the words of Terkel, is simple enough: "If journalists cannot freely report news which disturbs the wealthy and the powerful, then we'll learn only what the big boys want us to learn and they'll make our decisions for us."

Fear and Favor tells the story of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution's* hard-hitting editor Bill Kovatch. Under his leadership, the paper won a 1989 Pulitzer Prize for investigative reporter Bill Dedman's exposé of race-biased lending practices at Atlanta banks. A year earlier, the *Journal-Constitution* had run a story detailing a grand jury's investigation into allegations that Coca-Cola had bribed Soviet officials. According to Wendell Rawls Jr., an ex-assistant managing editor at the paper, at a Coca-Cola board meeting shortly after the article appeared, a director stood up and asked Anne Cox Chambers, a fellow board member and one of the *Journal-Constitution's* owners, why her editor had a "take-

no-prisoners policy for covering business."

In 1992, Kovatch was forced out and Dedman and Rawls resigned. With the *Journal-Constitution's* next editor, former *USA Today* executive editor Ron Martin, things went better for Coke. In 1994, for example, the paper gave front-page coverage to a speech by Coca-Cola chairman Roberto Goizueta to business leaders. In an exemplary feat of sycophancy, the paper also reprinted Goizueta's speech in its entirety and honored it as the subject of an editorial.

Fear and Favor also examines blood on the floor at the *New York Times*. Editors there punished investigative consumer reporter Frances Cerra for her tenacious coverage of the Shoreham nuclear power plant owned by the Long Island Light Company (LILCO). In 1982, she wrote that the company's financial situation was so dire that it might be forced into bank-

ruptcy. Her editor at the *Times* killed the story, explaining, "We can't print a story like that. It will affect LILCO stock." Cerra protested to her editor's superior, Peter Millones. She recalls: "Peter Millones got on the phone and his opening statement to me was, 'I hear you're causing trouble.' It went downhill from there, and right on the spot he said, 'Fine, you're no longer assigned to Long Island. Report into the city tomorrow.' So I was summarily yanked from that beat." Within a year, LILCO stopped paying dividends.

"I came to understand that freedom of the press is only guaranteed when you own the press," says Cerra. "This is something I learned from the *New York Times*."

The public domain at PBS is also fraught with peril. Consider the case of *The Kwitney Report with Jonathan Kwitney*, which debuted on PBS in 1988. Kwitney, a former investigative reporter at the *Wall Street Journal*, made his name in the '70s investigating the CIA. In one segment, Kwitney chronicled the assassinations of Guatemalan labor-union leaders targeted for trying to organize workers at American-owned factories. At a Coca-Cola plant, for example, more than a dozen union leaders were killed. Predictably enough, *The Kwitney Report* failed to attract corporate and foundation sponsors, and was canceled for that reason in 1989.

Despite its problems, Robert McChesney argues in *Corporate Media and the Threat to Democracy* (Seven Stories Press, 1997), public broadcasting is a forum that must be vigorously defended. McChesney, a journalism professor at the University of Wisconsin, has produced a 74-page pamphlet that, in the tradition of Tom Paine, systematically examines and refutes the myths that provide the "impenetrable ideological armor" protecting corporate media from criticism.

In fact, McChesney calls on us to go further, and formulate a public policy that would create "a well-funded, inde-

pendent journalism, cultural and communication system.” “Our task,” he writes, “is to push in the opposite direction, to create a public sphere and democratic media that can harness the creative vitality of our people and infuse it into our politics and culture.”

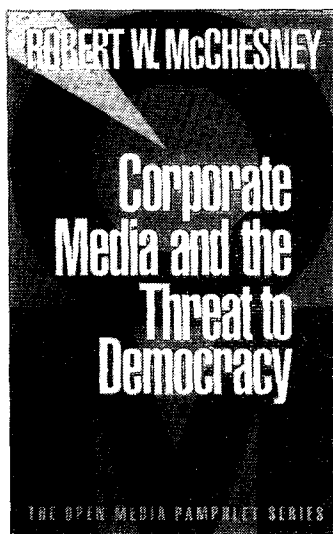
McChesney takes liberal and progressive foundations to task: “If they are serious about democracy, they are going to have to contribute to the establishment of the broad and rich media culture necessary for a democracy. They need to aggressively subsidize noncommercial and nonprofit media and journalism, as well as popular education campaigns concerning media ownership, control and policy making.”

A decentralized, pro-democracy media could go a long way in helping people become active participants in shaping their civic life. In *Becoming Citizens in the Age of Television* (University of Chicago Press, 1996), David Thelen reminds us of how far we have strayed from the ideal of government for and by the people.

Thelen, a professor of history at Indiana University and the editor of the *Journal of American History*, offers an interesting comparative analysis of letters that citizens wrote to congressional representatives regarding key foreign-policy debates, from World War I to the Iran-contra congressional hearings.

Thelen discovered that between 1917 and 1987, the proportion of letter writers “using the smallest of all voices, that of the individual, more than doubled from 14.6 to 35.2 percent.” At the same time, the number of letter writers who used a voice that “projected their political conclusions out of the cultures of community, occupation, ethnicity, partisanship, gender and religion in which 19th-century Americans had forged their political identities experienced a steady decline, falling from 73 percent in 1917 to 20 percent in 1987.”

According to Thelen, this disintegration of traditional political constituencies fostered the emergence of the “opinion industries” that invented “the means for listening—market research, opinion polls, focus groups, civilian and military surveillance—and the means for speaking—advertising campaigns, public relations, spin doctors—that now distort politics.” But this kind of listening and speaking denigrated individuals “as uniform components of audiences or markets, as submerged in masses whose voice existed only when it could be quantified by the techniques of opinion management.”



For their part, Thelen argues, politicians got used to representing this “seemingly new kind of citizen, who moved in masses, suddenly and decisively.” As a result, he continues, our leaders “lost the capacity to see and hear individual citizens even when their voices were on the other ends of phone lines or in the pages of letters being answered in senators’ offices.”

Things have grown worse. Opinion managers intercede more than ever in the political conversation between candidates for elected office and the people who elect them. During the 1992 campaign, for example, interpretation by TV journalists consumed 71 percent of campaign coverage time, leaving the candidates with only 12 percent. By 1992, candidates could expect, on average, 8.4 seconds of uninterrupted speech in a soundbite on the nightly news—down from 42.3 seconds in 1968.

Thelen offers several prescriptions for the ailing body politic. Campaign finance reform, he writes, would be a good place to start: “Since opinion management is an expensive habit that is fed by people with a special interest in controlling government, we can free elections from domination by the managerial values of advertising and marketing by taking the profit out of managing opinion and limiting the supply of money.”

More fundamentally, he offers this suggestion: “To remake politics we must do something at once simple and profound: We must speak. Rather than waiting to be polled and massed ... we must dismiss the figments and jargon of opinion management. We must think and act politically as we do with the people around us.”

Ever the unrepentant populist, Thelen advises us to take to heart the words of turn-of-the-century muckraker Lincoln Steffens, who wrote in 1909:

Uninformed and misinformed; pauperized or over-worked; misled or betrayed by their leaders—financial, industrial, political and ecclesiastical, the people are suspicious, weary, and very, very busy, but they are, nonetheless, the first, last and best appeal in all great human cases. Certainly the first rule for the political reformer is: Go to the voters. And the reason seems to be, not that the people are better than their betters, but that they are more disinterested; they are not possessed by possessions; they have not so many “things” and “friends.” They can afford, they are free to be fair. And, though each individual in the great crowd lacks some virtues, they all together have what no individual has, a combination of all the virtues. ◀

L A B O R

Driven mad

“D

iving a cab feels a lot like being a cowboy,” says San Francisco cabby David Barlow. With caved-in bucket seats for a saddle, taxi drivers ride a treacherous urban range, alone in search of fare. The pay is low—on a bad shift as little as \$10 total—and the hours mind-numbingly long. Upward mobility is far less likely than robbery or life-threatening injury. Welcome to the most dangerous job in America, where a taxi cab is a driver’s refuge and prison.

A 1996 study by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health found that cab driving is America’s most hazardous job—more perilous than coal mining or police work. Eighty-six drivers were murdered last year, double the homicide rate for sheriffs and bailiffs, the next highest group. Taxi work is so dangerous that drivers in some cities are not required

to wear seat belts. The risk of being injured in an accident takes a back seat to drivers’ fears of being unable to escape attack.

Cabby slayings are grisly and sometimes occur without apparent motive. In May 1996, for example, 55-year-old Izrail Nikolayensky was found dead in his cab on New York City’s Staten Island at 3:20 a.m., with a single bullet shot to the head. According to a three-paragraph *New York Times* news brief, “nothing appeared to have been stolen from the car.” Across the Hudson River, in Newark, N.J., four drivers were murdered in 1995 by a four-person team that called dispatchers for rides, then robbed the drivers and shot them in the back of the head.

En route to pick up a fare one night in 1989, San Francisco driver John Coleman was beaten over the head with a 2-by-4 and left for dead in the gutter. At 1:40 a.m., an ambulance delivered him to the trauma unit at San Francisco General Hospital. Coleman, according to court records, was “totally disabled due to injuries sustained in the course and scope of

his service as a driver for Yellow Cab Cooperative.”

But despite Coleman’s crippling on-the-job injuries, Yellow Cab refused to pay his medical bills, insisting he was an “independent contractor” and therefore not entitled to workers compensation. For several years, Coleman fought off death while Yellow fought his claim. Yellow eventually settled out of court with Coleman’s guardian, reportedly for \$500,000. In 1993, Coleman died of pneumonia.

Repetitive-strain injuries to the back and wrist are also common, but most go undocumented. “When you’re out on the road for 12 hours at a stretch, your chances of getting injured are relatively high,” says Mark Gruberg, chair of the United Taxicab Workers (UTW), a driver advocacy group in San Francisco. But because San Francisco cab drivers are usually labeled independent contractors, says Gruberg, California’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration doesn’t track driver injuries. Advocates say cabby injuries go unreported for another reason as well: Drivers, many of whom are immigrants with little knowledge of their labor rights, fear losing their jobs.

Disregard for driver safety takes a daily toll on cabbies’ health and income. “You’re forced to pay the company \$90 a shift (to “lease” out a cab) and they give you a complete junker with over 300,000 miles on it, and no support in the seats,” says Mark Paulsen, a driver for more than 25 years. “Where you’d hope to have a curve in the seat for your lumbar area, you’ll have a huge gap.” Seats are often caved in, springs busted, and the back rests welded into an uncomfortable and immovable position. Paulsen’s back problems are so bad he can’t drive—or earn—as much as he’d like. But forced to pay their own hospital expenses for on-the-job injuries, drivers get back behind the wheel as soon as possi-

*Crime,
abusive bosses
and a corrupt
medallion
system make
cabbies’
lives hell.*

By Christopher Cook

ble to cover the bills.

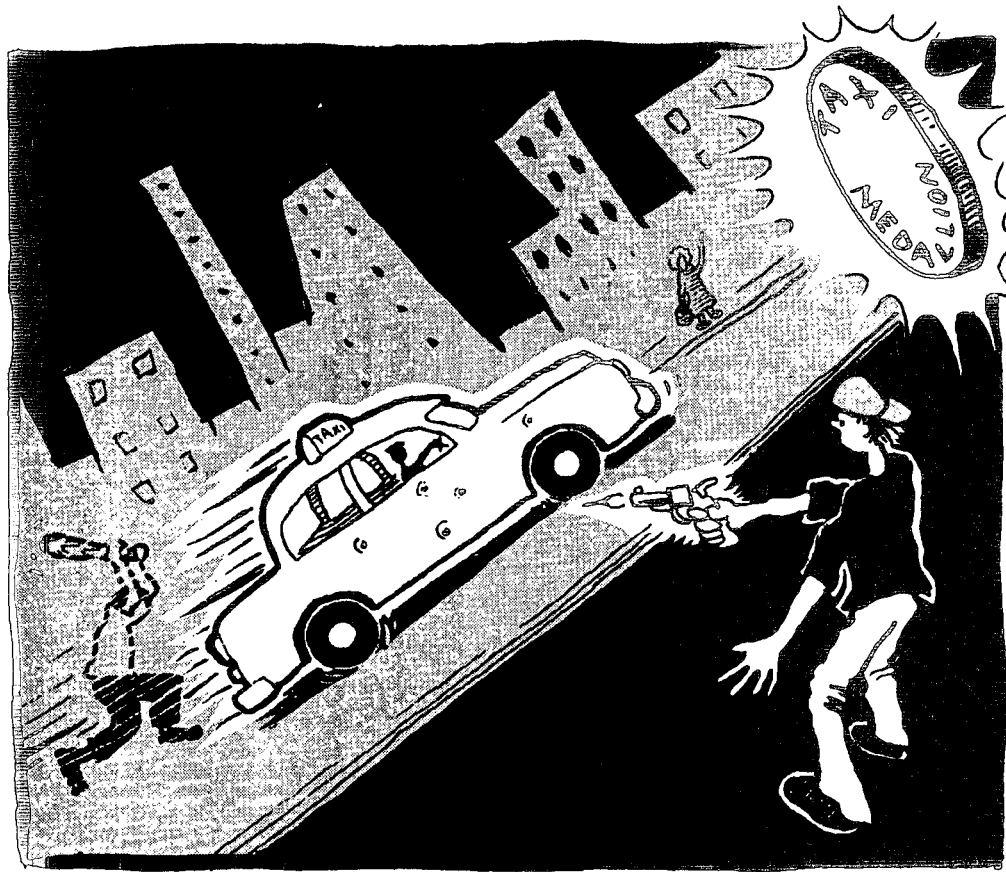
While the prospect of robberies, knifings and shootings lurks in the background, drivers must navigate through a minefield of hazards posed by exploitative bosses and abusive top-tier cabbies. In the cab-world pecking order, says former driver Ruach Graffis, now an organizer with UTW, "drivers are considered to have no power. They are the bottom rung on the totem pole." On a regular basis, they are robbed of their dignity, money and legal rights. For example, says Graffis, "Dispatchers will send drivers to the same place where a robbery just took place, and they won't post robbery addresses." When cabbies are robbed, they are often too intimidated to bring it up with their employer.

Once they land the prize, they are their own boss for life.

Originally used as a regulatory device to screen drivers in the '30s, the medallion has become a tool for power and corruption. Effectively controlling when drivers can operate a cab, medallion holders are powerful bosses. Many sit on cab-company boards of directors, setting company policies on such matters as the gate fees charged to drivers who rent cabs by the shift. According to Graffis, the marriage between medallion drivers and company management is so close "they're interchangeable." A seat on the company board of directors is part of what taxi firms offer to keep medallion holders in their corner.

"The difference between a permit holder and a non-permit holder is like night and day," says Gruberg, the UTW chair. "A permit holder can get these huge fees from companies [by leasing out the medallion], and the driver is paying a gate fee that reflects that. Half of what a driver pays is not going into cab maintenance or safety, it's going right into the pocket of the permit holder. The permit's worth gold, and if you don't have it, you're just scraping it out." During an average 12-hour shift, a cabbie can net \$100, but it's not uncommon for drivers to take a loss. "The worst shift I ever had I earned \$9 or \$12, but I've talked to drivers who have actually lost money on a shift," says Gruberg.

Until recently, drivers earned their medallions through years of hard work and patience as they



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"Most drivers will hand over their money at knife point and not complain to the company," says Jim Lewis, a San Francisco driver active with the UTW.

But through gun-fire and potholes, Paulsen and his colleagues drive on—logging more than 3,000 hours a year—in pursuit of a medallion. Worth more than its weight in gold, the medallion is literally what drives the cab business. Every cab on the street must have one. In a complicated and inequitable game of musical medallions, the shiny badges are rented out to companies by medallion-holding drivers. The companies, in turn, lease these mobile permits to other drivers on a shift-by-shift basis. Lured by the promise of profit, cabbies drive for years, sometimes even decades, before their number on the medallion waiting list comes up.

moved from number 10,000 to number one on the waiting list. In San Francisco, drivers pay a \$150 to \$300 annual fee to retain their medallions, which technically belong to the city. But in most cities, the badges now are speculative ventures, bought and sold on the open market. In a sealed-bid auction last year, New York City officials sold new medallions on the open market for the first time since the Depression. The average cost: \$172,000. Medallions sold to cab companies went for as much as \$210,000, according to the *New York Times*.

Such gargantuan price tags put the medallions out of reach for most drivers, eliminating any chance at upward mobility. Most medallion drivers take out huge loans through taxi-industry credit unions, which puts them deep in

debt for years, if not for life. If a driver defaults on a loan, the credit union can reclaim the medallion and sell it, often at a substantial profit.

But the medallion is more than a license to profit off drivers. As many cabbies attest, badge owners frequently use their status to intimidate and silence their colleagues—and sometimes as a license to steal. Barlow, the San Francisco cabby, recalls how one driver, in response to a radio dispatch call, began loading a passenger's luggage for a trip to the airport, a lucrative fare. A medallion driver pulled up and told the first driver, "No, that's my order." The medallion holder then made the driver unload the luggage, telling him, "If you have any problems with this, you can talk to the office."

This driver was threatened with losing his job because he committed one of the industry's cardinal sins. "If you mess with a medallion holder, you'll lose your job," Barlow says. "Companies want to keep the medallion. It always behooves them to keep the medallion holders comfortable."

"When you're a driver, you can feel pretty intimidated," Barlow adds. "Some drivers are so intimidated, they won't even talk to other drivers, because they don't know if they're medallion drivers who will report back to the company."

The medallion's allure of financial independence provides potent leverage for the taxi industry. Even when Paulsen's employer, like numerous San Francisco companies, unveiled a contract last year requiring drivers to sign away many workplace rights, he reluctantly cooperated. "I feel, no matter what I sign, eventually I'll get my medallion," he explains. "It's not a very smart way to be. It's somewhat irresponsible." But it's also economic survival.

Adding insult to injury, many taxi firms now coerce drivers into signing so-called "independent contractor" agreements that deny cabbies workers compensation, unemployment insurance and other rights. The nonnegotiable contracts force drivers to choose between higher incomes and basic employment rights. To be an "employee driver" with legal protections, such as workers compensation and unemployment insurance, drivers must fork over \$103 in lease fees for a 10-hour night shift. Far more economically attractive is the \$85 fee offered to "lease drivers"—whom the agreement terms independent contractors. Although drivers know they will need the workers compensation, all but a few decide the price is too high. At \$18 extra per night, access to these rights costs \$3,500 to \$4,000 over the course of a year.

"They offered you an employee contract, but it was so onerous, there were so many restrictions," says former cabby Jeffrey Beal, who drove for 15 years before moving on to construction work. "Clearly you'd make less money. You'd work longer hours with more restrictions. I was told that one driver signed it, and I'd be surprised if one did."

Spurred by John Coleman's death, thousands of San Francisco drivers joined a class-action lawsuit against several major cab firms for coercing cabbies into illegal contracts. Legal-aid attorney Christopher Ho, who represented the dri-

vers in the class-action suit, says the contracts are a trendy form of cost-cutting that allows employers to shirk responsibility for workers compensation. "It's really a mean-spirited, intentional approach to put the costs on the backs of these drivers. ... The [workers compensation] system was established so workers wouldn't have to worry about this. The exchange was smaller but certain remedies. That was the trade-off, and the very intent of that has been flouted by these companies."

In a ruling last October that could affect cab-industry practices nationwide, the San Francisco Superior Court ordered the cab companies to treat their drivers as regular employees, saying the firms' "independent contractor" agreements were an unlawful ploy to avoid responsibility for workers compensation, unemployment insurance and other job rights. The cab companies involved in the suit, all of whom refused to comment, may still file an appeal.

The court ruling appears to have chastened the cab companies a bit. In a surprise move in March, two of the cab firms in the class-action suit unveiled a new contract that gives drivers some breathing room. "The new contract doesn't say you are entitled to workers comp, but they no longer say you're not entitled," Gruberg says.

The cab industry's contracting schemes have inspired union organizing attempts, but they are also formidable barriers. "We can't organize until we get beyond independent contractor status," explains Graffis, the UTW organizer. "We can't even get on the premises. The companies have a continuous captive audience."

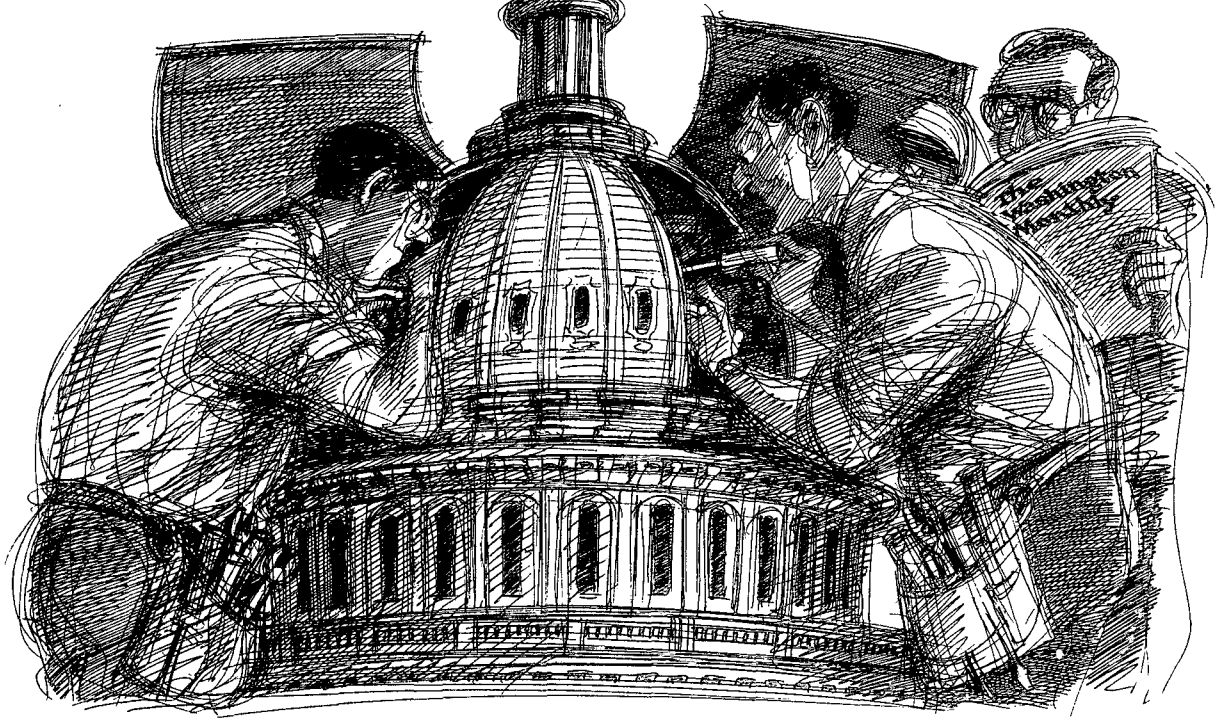
Even organizing drivers for the class-action suit proved difficult. As Ho discovered, many cabbies "don't want to come forward because they're afraid they'll be intimidated or harassed. ... One of our clients was being harassed by his company because of his involvement in this lawsuit." Another driver, Ho says, "was threatened with loss of his job if he filed a workers comp claim for his injury."

Another obstacle is the cab world's culture of independence. Drivers are fragmented, says Paulsen, and "too individualistic sometimes for their own good." Beal, the former cabby, agrees: "You can't get past the stubborn independence. That's why you can't get them to organize. They'll just get beat over the head every day rather than lose their independence."

Against stiff odds, the UTW has attracted 300 members since it was formed in 1989 and has gained affiliation with the Communication Workers of America. If the San Francisco drivers' court victory stands, the case could allow drivers to form an employee bargaining unit and eventually hold union elections. In the meantime, the UTW advises drivers of their rights and fights cabby exploitation. Gruberg predicts unionization is still five to 10 years down the road. ◀

Christopher Cook is a freelance writer based in San Francisco. His last story for *In These Times* was on leased labor.

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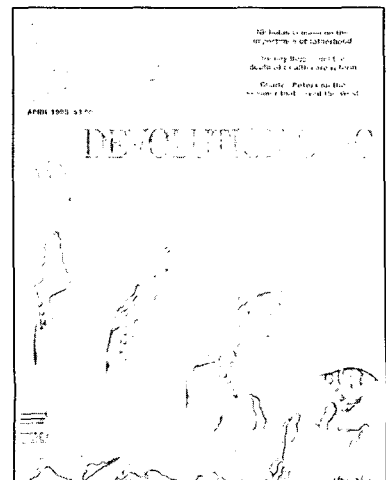
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E DUCATION

All politics is local

“S

chool Funds Used To Push Terrorists' Release” blared the front-page headline in the February 4 *Chicago Sun-Times*. The story alleged that between 1992 and 1995, Chicago's Roberto Clemente High School misused \$150,000 of state education funds for low-income students. Instead of buying books and pencils, the story reported, school administrators spent the money on a campaign to promote Puerto Rican independence and to free Puerto Rican political prisoners, turning the school into a “hotbed of Puerto Rican nationalism underwritten by taxpayers.”

The paper reeled off a score of sensationalist allegations: In some classrooms, the display of the American flag is forbidden; a speaker hired to talk to the students about Puerto Rican independence spat on an American flag; some school officials have ties with the Armed Forces of National

Liberation (FALN), the Puerto Rican group behind a series of bombings and armed attacks in the '70s; and radical Puerto Rican groups subsidize their activities by bringing pro-independence speakers, artists and entertainers to town at Clemente's expense.

The story enraged many Puerto Ricans. They claim the *Sun-Times* has engaged in a smear campaign against their community, rehashing stale, unproven accusations. “The portrayal of Puerto Ricans as terrorists is not only offensive, but also contributes to the perpetuation of negative stereotypes and xenophobia,” says Migdalia Rivera, executive director of the Latino Institute, a civic organization.

Clemente High School is named after the late Puerto Rican baseball star and humanitarian Roberto Clemente. Built in 1973 for approximately \$15 million, the modern, nine-story school is located in a working-class Puerto Rican neighborhood on Chicago's Northwest Side. Of its 2,373 students, about

80 percent are poor, and 54 percent are Puerto Rican. Twenty-nine of its 153 teachers are Latino. The school receives about \$1.1 million annually in Illinois Chapter I anti-poverty funds, which the state doles out based on low-income enrollment and which must be used for “educationally beneficial programs.” Clemente students routinely score poorly in standardized reading and math tests. The school was placed on financial probation in 1995 and academic probation in October 1996.

Since the *Sun-Times* story broke, Chicago School Board auditors, along with an outside accountant, have been meticulously reviewing Clemente's expenditures, searching for improprieties. “We're not finding widescale violations of board policy or state law regarding those anti-poverty funds,” says Maribeth Vander Weele, chief investigator for the Chicago Public Schools. A committee of Illinois state lawmakers is also investigating the *Sun-Times* allegations. “Legally [speaking], it's possible that they did nothing wrong,” state Rep. Edgar López of Chicago, who heads the investigation, told *La Raza*, a Spanish-language newspaper.

At its most basic level, the *Sun-Times* story was a classic example of irresponsible journalism. Few of its allegations stand up under scrutiny. (The *Sun-Times* refused comment for this story.) Written by crime reporter Michelle Campbell and the newspaper's regular gossip columnist, Michael Sneed, it contained two identified sources and eleven extensive quotes from anonymous sources. Powerful Chicago politicians regularly feed negative information about their adversaries to Sneed, who then dishes the dirt from these “unidentified sources.”

Antonio Beltran, a community member of Clemente's local school council since its inception, insists the *Sun-Times* allegations are false. “The *Sun-Times*, Board of Education

A furor over Puerto Rican nationalism masks the real issues at stake in Chicago's school reform.

By Wilfredo Cruz

and state auditors didn't find anything wrong in the past with our school council, and they will not prove anything wrong again, because we didn't do anything wrong," Beltran says. Norma Torres, president of Clemente's local school council from 1995 to 1996, explains that councils cannot simply spend funds as they wish. "All of Clemente's local school council's programs and monies had the approval of the subdistrict superintendent, the Board of Education and state auditors," she says.

Clemente teachers, students and administrators strongly assert that students are not brainwashed with pro-Puerto Rican independence politics. "In my four years here, no teacher has ever politically indoctrinated students with Puerto Rican independence stuff," says Elias Valencia, a Clemente senior. Judith Gearon, a 28-year veteran social science and history teacher at Clemente, makes the same point. "A few teachers might speak briefly about the political status of Puerto Rico in their history classes," she says. "But it's always done in a professional and intelligent manner, looking at the different political viewpoints. What's wrong with that?"

To buttress their allegations, the *Sun-Times* reporters quoted an internal 1996 School Board report that found "widespread political activism at Clemente thwarting academic progress." Yet Lawrence Swanson, one of the report's authors from the School Board's Office of Accountability, is hard-pressed to elaborate on the political activism he found in his two-day visit to Clemente. Swanson says only that he found one Clemente teacher passing out communist literature to students and that several teachers complained to him of political activism.

Clemente teachers and administrators also deny that the Puerto Rican artists, writers and musicians invited to the school spoke to the students about Puerto Rican nationalism. Some may have appeared at neighborhood pro-Puerto Rican independence rallies and fundraisers after meeting their contractual obligations to Clemente, but that, they say, is their prerogative. "It's not illegal to peaceably advocate for or participate in political causes," says Emile Schepers, director of the Chicago Committee to Defend the Bill of Rights, a civil rights group.

But if the story was so flimsy, why was it splashed across the front page of the newspaper? Many believe local politicians orchestrated the story to hurt their political adversaries as part of the ongoing feud between Democratic Party members in the wards surrounding Clemente. One camp contains businessman and long-time powerful Alderman Richard F. Mell, and his allies Alderwoman Vilma Colón and state Rep. Edgar López. In the opposing camp are Alderman Billy Ocasio, state Sen. Miguel Del Valle of Chicago and U.S. Rep. Luis Gutiérrez.



A mural at Roberto Clemente High School in Chicago.

The two sides are fighting for control over local political power, city neighborhood grants and who decides the destiny of local neighborhoods. Chicago's Democratic machine has traditionally sponsored Latino politicians who in return, when push comes to shove, side with the machine's interests over those of the community. Mell's group perceives the up-and-coming Ocasio, Del Valle and Gutiérrez as too politically independent. Rather than toe the party line, these three Puerto Rican elected officials are outspoken on issues like immigration, housing and police brutality that are important to their

Yanqui go home

THE PUERTO RICAN ARMED FORCES FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION (FALN), DORMANT SINCE 1980, WAS ONE OF THE LEADING militant underground organizations advocating armed resistance to U.S. rule in Puerto Rico. The group was responsible for killing five people and injuring about 70 in dozens of bombings since 1974. In April 1980, police captured about a dozen FALN members in Evanston, a suburb of Chicago. They were all given life sentences for conspiracy to overthrow the U.S. government. The struggle to obtain their freedom has expanded into a human rights campaign among many Puerto Ricans both in the United States and on the island, though many shy away from involvement for fear of being tainted, as happened with the Clemente High School story.

In June 1983, about 70 FBI agents and Chicago police raided Clemente's satellite school, the Pedro Albizu Campos Alternative High School, looking for FALN connections. The raiders came away empty-handed, although they did nearly \$25,000 worth of damage to the school, which is housed in the neighborhood's Puerto Rican Cultural Center.

About 40 percent of Puerto Rico's residents believe the island should become the 51st U.S. state. Another 40 percent or so feel it should remain a U.S. Commonwealth. A small minority, hovering around 15 percent of voters, advocate Puerto Rico's independence. Several nonbinding plebiscites over the past two decades have confirmed these numbers, the latest being a referendum voted on last year. —W.C.

communities, and they work doggedly to get government funds for local schools, social services and infrastructure. This has won them wide popularity among local residents.

Mell's camp seems to be trying to paint Ocasio, Del Valle and Gutiérrez as crazed pro-independence fanatics in order to hurt their re-election chances. The *Sun-Times* piece dragged Gutiérrez and Ocasio into the article, mentioning that they both support Puerto Rican independence and insinuating that they may be closet sympathizers of the FALN. "The whole story was motivated by Gutiérrez's political enemies. Mell's people want political control of the neighborhood," says José López, director of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center and a local community leader.

Puerto Rican leaders are deeply concerned that the school board will use the *Sun-Times* allegations to strip away the Clemente local school council's powers and eventually convert Clemente into a magnet school. Magnet schools admit academically elite students from across the city. Students with average or low academic scores are displaced to other high schools further away.

It's no accident that such a conversion would coincide with the changing demographics of the neighborhood. West Town, where Clemente High School is located, and nearby Wicker Park and Logan Square are undergoing gentrification as young, white, middle-class professionals move in. Trendy, upscale restaurants, bars and shops are springing up on commercial strips, while expensive townhouses, condos and single-family homes are rapidly being rehabbed or built. Homes that a few years ago sold for about \$60,000 now sell for \$180,000 to over a million dollars.

Leonard Dominguez, director of policy for Chicago schools, believes Clemente should be redesigned to raise academic standards, and he won't rule out the possibility of its conversion to a magnet school. "You might look for some magnet-like programs like advanced placement (college-level) classes in reading and math," he concedes.

The *Sun-Times* story can also be interpreted as part of a rearguard action to undermine school reform. In 1988, thanks to pressure from community groups, the Illinois State Legislature passed a law decentralizing authority in Chicago's public school system. The law established a local school council in each of the city's 557 public schools, composed of six parents, two teachers, one student, two community representatives and the principal.

These councils, elected every two years in each school, now have the authority to choose their own principals and wide discretion over how to spend anti-poverty funds. Before the reforms, according to Don Moore, executive director of the education policy group Designs For Change, the downtown bureaucracy used the anti-poverty monies to hire central staff and balance budgets, while the children received very little. Since reform, he says, studies indicate the school councils are spending the funds on programs that enhance the education of poor children.

Citing a myriad of problems in certain schools—political

nepotism, fiscal mismanagement, teacher strikes and poor academic performance chief among them—Chicago Mayor Richard Daley persuaded the Illinois Legislature in 1995 to give him more direct control of the city's school system. The mayor now appoints a five-member School Reform Board of Trustees, which has wide powers to implement school policy. He's placed his top aides Paul Vallas and Gery Chico on the board, as chief executive officer and president respectively.

It's unclear where the lines will eventually be drawn between the reform board's authority and that of the local school councils. The board has taken actions, such as hiring interim principals in troubled schools, that seem to step on local school councils' turf. Now it's trying to use the Clemente controversy to take away the local school councils' authority to spend the \$261 million in state anti-poverty funds that Chicago schools are allotted each year. To the chagrin of school-reform advocates, Vallas has asked Illinois lawmakers to either tighten the "obscure" guidelines on how state anti-poverty funds can be spent, or give school districts the power to create additional guidelines.

"We are concerned that school reform is in danger," warns Sheila R. Castillo, director of the Chicago Association of Local Schools Councils, a nonprofit educational group. "The manufactured crimes at Clemente are being used by the School Reform Board to say, 'Look, we need to have all the authority downtown.'"

◀ **Wilfredo Cruz** is a former investigative reporter with *The Chicago Reporter*. He is a faculty member in the Liberal Education Department at Columbia College in Chicago.

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HEALTH

Political ergonomics

*Congressional
Republicans
seem intent on
undermining
OSHA's efforts
to address the
causes of
repetitive-
strain injuries.*

By Vernon Mogensen

Last December, a federal jury in Brooklyn, N.Y., caused a sensation when it found the Digital Equipment Corp. liable for crippling hand, wrist and arm injuries suffered by three working women who used computer keyboards made by the company. The award of nearly \$6 million, the first of its kind in the nation, dramatized the increasing incidence and serious nature of cumulative trauma disorders (CTDs)—also known as repetitive-strain injuries—and underscored the urgent need for preventive regulation.

CTDs include a number of musculoskeletal ailments such as carpal tunnel syndrome, epicondylitis, ganglion, tendinitis and tenosynovitis. Symptoms include numbness, tingling, weakness and shooting pain in the hands, wrists, forearms and fingers. In extreme cases, victims are unable to perform simple tasks, such as lifting young

children or opening bureau drawers. Carpal tunnel syndrome, common among computer users, is so debilitating that it results in more lost workdays (a median of 30 days per case) than any other occupational illness. One of the plaintiffs in the Digital case suffered from carpal tunnel syndrome and underwent four unsuccessful operations to restore the use of her arms.

Word processing and data-entry workers are not the only ones who suffer. CTDs also plague auto assemblers, poultry cutters, meatpackers and workers whose jobs require heavy lifting. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, CTDs have been the fastest-growing class of occupational illness in the United States for more than a decade. Workers reported 23,000 CTD cases in 1981, accounting for 18 percent of all reported occupational illnesses. By 1994, the number of CTD cases had jumped to 332,000, or two-thirds of occupational illnesses reported that year. Even these figures—which are

drawn from employer reports and exclude federal, state and local government workers, as well as the self-employed—understate the problem. The American Public Health Association estimates that more than 775,000 workers suffered CTDs and related injuries in 1995.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration considers CTDs to be the nation's most important occupational health problem, costing the U.S. economy an estimated \$100 billion a year in workers compensation claims and lost work time. In OSHA's view, CTDs are largely preventable through the application of ergonomics, the science of redesigning the workplace to meet the safety and health needs of the worker.

In 1990, OSHA began working on an ergonomics standard that would address the causes of repetitive-strain injuries. The next year, it issued nonbinding ergonomic guidelines for the meatpacking industry. By September 1994, OSHA's ergonomics standard was ready for implementation. It would have required employers to revamp the work process to limit the amount of time workers could spend at five tasks considered CTD risk factors: performance of the same motion or motion pattern; use of vibrating or impact tools; use of forceful hand exertions; unassisted frequent or heavy lifting; and fixed or awkward postures. The limits were two to four hours in the case of the first four risk factors, and one to two hours in the case of the fifth. OSHA would enforce the standard to insure that employers met its requirements.

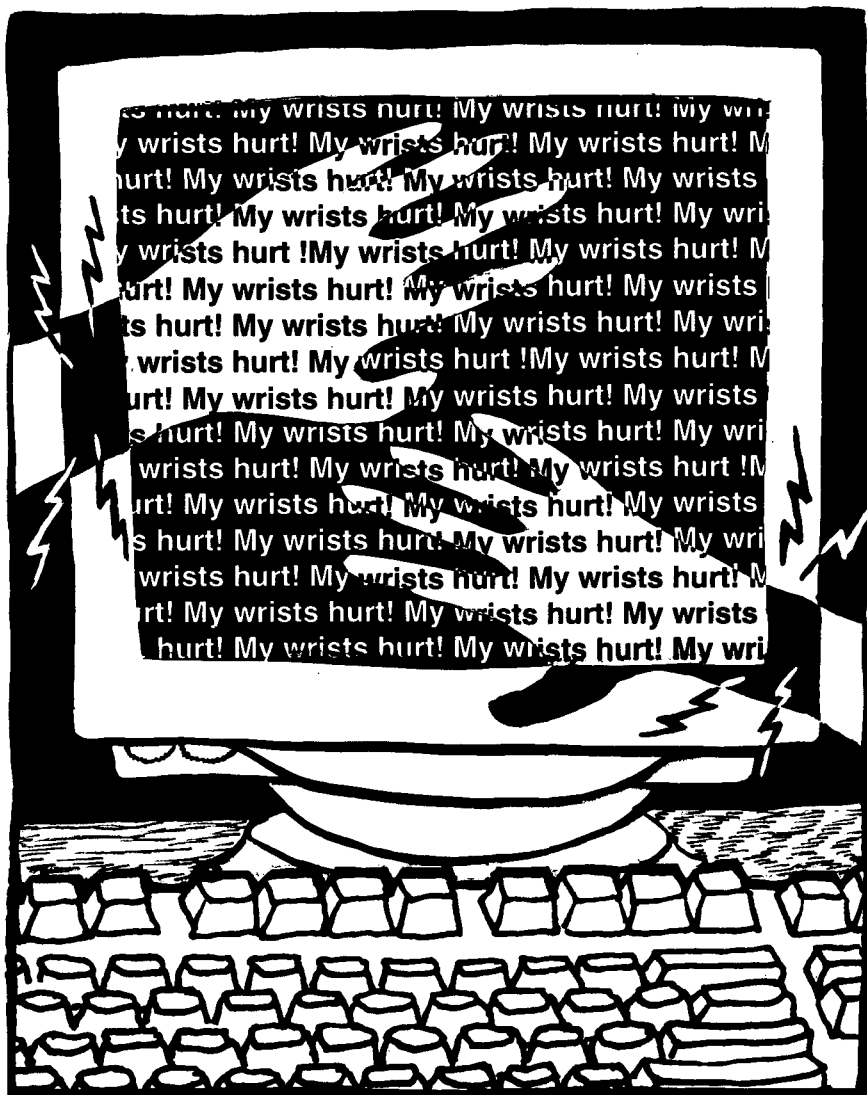
However, the Clinton administration decided not to implement the standard, fearing that Republicans would exploit the issue during the fall 1994 election campaign. Once the Republicans captured control of Congress, it was too late. The GOP quickly targeted OSHA for budget-cut-

ting, singling out the ergonomics standard for particular scrutiny. In March 1995, House Republicans cut \$16 million from OSHA's budget and ordered it to stop work on the ergonomics standard. In the face of this attack, OSHA narrowed the scope of the standard to apply only to workplaces where two workers have been diagnosed with similar CTDs within the same year. Whereas the original version emphasized prevention (it would have applied to most workplaces under OSHA's jurisdiction), the weakened stan-

Ballenger sponsored an OSHA reform bill that, had it passed, would have eliminated OSHA's power to use the general duty clause of the Occupational Safety and Health Act to penalize employers for hazardous working conditions not already covered by a regulation. With no ergonomics standard in place, the general duty clause was the only enforcement tool available to OSHA to combat the growing CTD problem. He dismissed the need for regulation of ergonomics-related disorders, saying, "No one ever died from ergonomics."

It's hardly surprising that the ergonomics standard has met such stiff opposition in Congress. The National Association of Manufacturers, one of Washington's most influential lobbying groups, set up the National Coalition on Ergonomics, an alliance of 300 corporations and trade associations, expressly to fight the standard. Corporate-financed think tanks such as the Heritage Foundation and the Cato Institute have played an important role in promoting the view that the CTD crisis is little more than an employee "comfort" problem best dealt with by employers on a voluntary basis.

Some of the most vocal opponents of the standard in Congress have strong ties to companies with long histories of health and safety problems. DeLay, who is known in conservative circles as "Mr. Dereg," has nursed a grudge against regulatory agencies ever since OSHA fined his pest control company for safety violations when he was a private businessman. Poultry workers suffer from one of the highest rates of CTDs, and OSHA's ergonomics standard would have had a direct impact on chicken-processing companies such as Tyson, which has a plant in Ballenger's congressional district. According to the *Washington Post*, UPS lobbyist and former OSHA Director Dorothy "Dottie" Strunk was so closely involved in writing Ballenger's bill that an early version was dubbed "Dottie's draft." Not surprisingly, UPS has actively opposed



dard would not apply to a given workplace until people there were injured. In addition, OSHA would no longer require employers to analyze their safety logs and workers compensation records in order to identify jobs that might be high CTD risks. Nor would employers have to evaluate their safety programs to find better ways to prevent CTDs.

But even this eviscerated version did not appease House Republicans; later that month, they ordered another \$3.5 million cut. This measure, House Majority Whip Tom DeLay argued, was necessary to punish OSHA for "flouting the will of this Congress."

That same year, North Carolina Republican Rep. Cass

the ergonomics standard. Many of its delivery and warehouse workers incur repetitive-strain injuries while lifting boxes and making deliveries. The company holds the record for the most safety and health complaints and fines in OSHA's 26-year history. It also gave House Republicans close to \$750,000 during the 1995-96 election cycle.

Last July, Republican Rep. Henry Bonilla of Texas tried again to attach a rider to OSHA's appropriation denying it the right to work on the ergonomics standard or even to gather scientific data on repetitive-motion illness. In response, the American Public Health Association's Occupational Health and Safety Section sent an urgent letter to

Congress criticizing the Republican plan. "Within the scientific community, there is a strong consensus, based on an extensive body of solid evidence, on the role of ergonomic factors in the incidence of workplace injuries," the letter stated. "If no more data are collected, workplace injuries will erroneously appear to be eliminated. Prevention programs will be endangered and important research terminated. Crippling injuries throughout American workplaces will be the inevitable result."

In a surprise victory, House Democrats narrowly mustered enough support to defeat the rider. Thanks largely to pressure from organized labor and the shift of public opinion against Gingrich, 34 moderate Republicans voted with the Democrats.

This victory notwithstanding, OSHA's ergonomics standard faces an uncertain future. The agency is now permitted to work on the standard again, but the Republicans have come close to forcing OSHA to gut the proposed standard for the past two years and will probably try again during budget negotiations this summer. The fate of the standard now depends largely on President Clinton's willingness to support it. So far, he's given mixed signals. Clinton acquiesced in 1995 when congressional Republicans used the appropriations process to forbid OSHA from promulgating the standard. Last spring, on the other hand, Clinton promised the Service Employees International Union—many of whose members suffer from CTDs—that he would veto any legislation undermining "the safety and the solidarity of the workplace."

In the same speech, Clinton asserted that "our government is now the smallest it's been since 1965, but it's still strong enough to protect workplace safety." Despite such promises, his rhetoric about "reinventing" government spells trouble for the ergonomics standard and a strong OSHA. The Clinton administration would put companies on the honor system by allowing them to self-report illnesses and injuries. OSHA would then focus its inspection efforts on the companies that reported the worst safety records, while exempting the others. This program is based on the administration's controversial "Maine 200" pilot study, which focused on inspecting the 200 companies with the worst self-reported safety records. Clinton's plan follows in the footsteps of similar business-friendly initiatives by the Reagan and Bush administrations, giving companies an incentive to under-report the number of injuries and illnesses. Likewise, some companies may follow the honor system in the absence of an ergonomics standard, but if experience is

any guide, most will ignore OSHA's nonbinding recommendations. CTD rates have stabilized in some high-risk industries, such as meatpacking, not because of a voluntary honor system but because companies were anticipating the promulgation of OSHA's ergonomics standard. Even the industry-funded Insurance Information Institute admits that this stabilization "stems in part" from the fact that OSHA's ergonomics standard was in the works.

On the bright side, in November, California became the first state in the nation to adopt its own ergonomics standard. While corporate opponents managed to weaken it considerably, California OSHA's standard serves as a precedent for further action at the federal level.

While the handful of cases adjudicated prior to the Digital decision resulted in victories for the computer industry or in out-of-court settlements, this landmark decision has focused public attention on ergonomics. Furthermore, with more than 2,000 cases in the judicial pipeline, the CTD problem will not disappear. Suits against the asbestos industry followed a similar pattern—early losses for workers followed by victories as more information on corporate liability was uncovered. Still, the best policy is prevention, and until an effective OSHA ergonomics standard is on the books, increasing numbers of workers will suffer. ◀

Vernon Mogensen teaches American politics at the City University of New York. He is the author of *Office Politics: Computers, Labor, and the Fight for Safety and Health* (Rutgers University Press).



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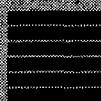
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The stopwatchers

By Barbara Garson

It happened to be thinking about Frederick Taylor, thinking about him almost fondly, believe it or not, when *The One Best Way: Frederick Winslow Taylor and the Enigma of Efficiency* landed on my desk.

Taylor was the rich kid from Philadelphia who left Exeter to become an apprentice at Midvale Steel. There he developed a grudging respect for the journeymen machinists (this was the late 19th century) who taught him the tricks of their exceedingly skilled trade.

Once promoted into management, young Fred repaid his friends—he claimed all his life that he was most comfortable with the men in the shops—by making formal time and motion studies of their work. Then he prepared a set of instruction cards mandating the one best way to do each job (lift bar, fill mold, etc.). If every laborer and every foreman followed his instructions exactly, Taylor claimed, output would double, triple or quadruple. The original workman, paid according to scientifically set piece rates, could take home as much as 50 percent more—if he stayed. If he left, that was OK, too, because properly Taylorized jobs wouldn't require skilled workmen. In fact, it would often be better, Taylor discovered, if the original machinist walked out and someone less brainy and more brawny were dragged in off the street.

The glorious thing about his science of labor, Taylor proclaimed, was that it could be applied not only to factories but to "the management of our farms, our churches, our businesses and our homes." The one sine qua non for Scientific Management, he emphasized repeatedly, was, "All brain work must be centralized in the planning department."

No, Frederick Winslow Taylor wasn't exactly Mr. Nice Guy, at least not if you valued your brain and didn't work in the planning department. But I found myself thinking about him nostalgically because of what I was learning about his 20th-century successors.

In my 1988 book *The Electronic Sweatshop: How Computers Are Transforming the Office of the Future into the Factory of the Past*, I wrote about white-collar automation as it was happening, before the economic results were in. Automation of back-office tasks—data entry, accounting,

airline reservation-taking, stockbrokering—seemed efficient, if unpleasant. But most automation in the front office, where executive and secretary interact, looked like half-assed Taylorism to me.

In the early '80s, IBM systems men would walk right past the secretary's desk to ask the boss, "What does your secretary do for you?"

"Uh huh, uh huh," he would nod, juggling clipboards, note cards and other Taylorist props. "So what we'll need is a message center, a word-processing cluster and a travel reservation capability."

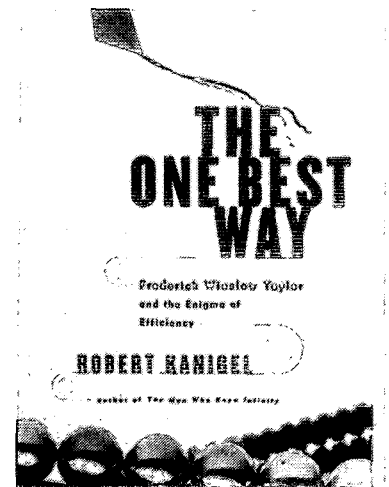
The secretaries (or their replacements from the temp agency) would be relegated to phone banks or typing pools where their work was reduced to timeable tasks—so many calls per hour, so many lines of second draft per minute. From there, the old craftsperson could watch with glee—or pity, if she were kind—as her former boss drifted around the office wondering who fills the postage meter or where you send a dictation tape that begins, "To Al what's-his-name, that asshole in Cleveland." A true Taylorist would have spent three to five years figuring out what a real secretary does. These IBM guys were just salesmen.

I watched companies spend millions to get rid of two secretaries. But I could never find a single study indicating that it was now cheaper to get a letter out. I couldn't say, at the time, that it wasn't. I could only note that no one knew what it cost before and no one knew what it cost after.

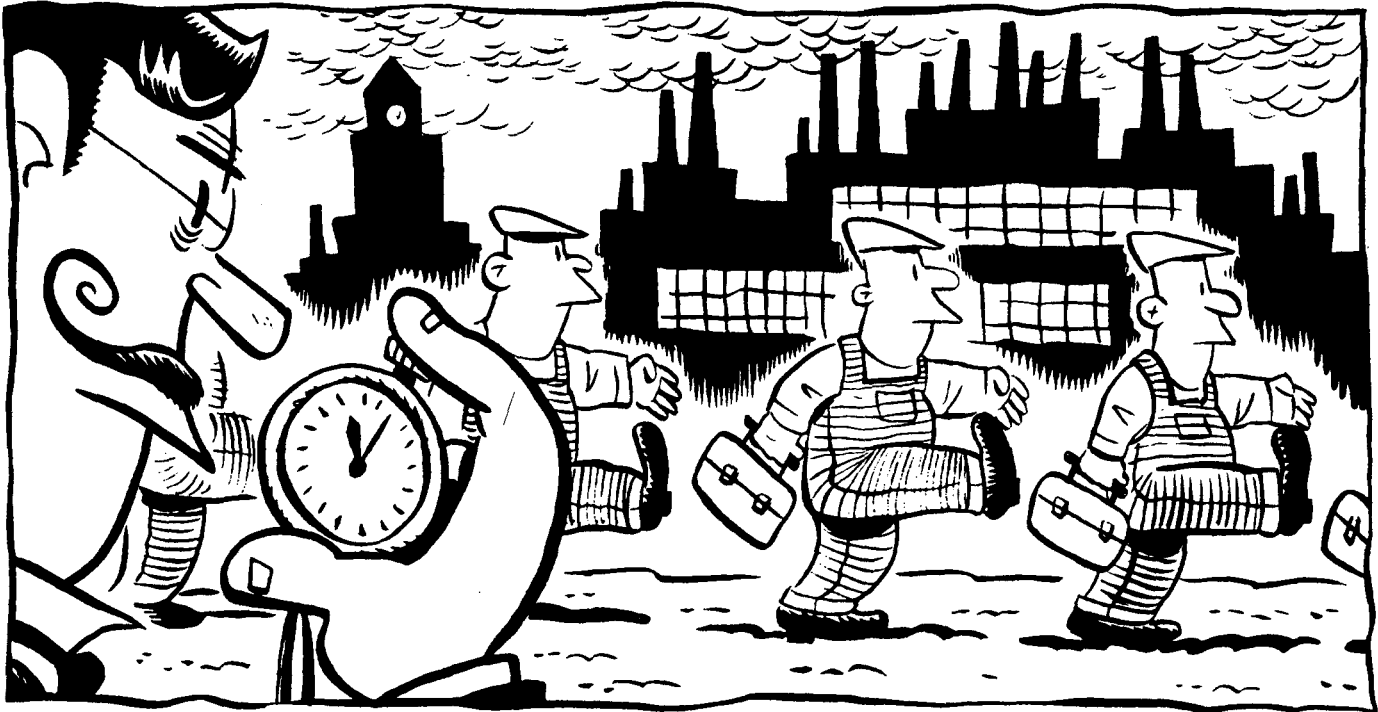
But those numbers are now available. They show that front-office automation has been an efficiency disaster. Despite the expenditure of billions on computer systems, office productivity has stagnated for two decades. That's why I was thinking admiringly of Frederick Taylor: He respected the crafts he Taylorized. And for good or bad, he was always efficient. Even coppersmith-turned-Marxist-scholar Harry Braverman, unremittently hostile to everything Taylor represented, accepted this conventional wisdom in his magnificent *Labor and Monopoly Capital*.

But Robert Kanigel tells a different story.

After Taylor left Midvale and Bethlehem Steel (the success stories that have gone down in history and folklore), he started his own factory, which failed. Then he became an efficiency



The One Best Way: Frederick Winslow Taylor and the Enigma of Efficiency
By Robert Kanigel
Viking
656 pp., \$34.95



consultant and was fired from just about every job he landed. Sometimes he was dismissed because he ticked off the workers, sometimes because owners found him too extravagant. Even when he left on good terms with full pay, his suggestions were rarely implemented, certainly never in the all-or-nothing manner his “science” of labor demanded. The companies Taylor helped benefited more from learning the latest techniques of high-speed steel production than from streamlining or Taylorizing work.

From Kanigel’s detailed business history, one can only conclude that Frederick Taylor, himself, was one of those half-assed Taylorists.

How then did his name become synonymous with America’s major contribution to industrial management? And why does the entire world accept Taylorism as an essential, if unpleasant, aspect of modern offices and factories?

The most exciting part of this big biography comes toward the end, where these questions get answered. But you don’t have to read it all to get there. As a matter of fact, *The One Best Way* is three or four good books. It starts as a leisurely portrait of a 19th-century upper-class family—their education, their social circles, their mandatory European peregrinations. Then it shifts to the Pennsylvania steel mills and becomes a history of technology at a time when the United States was emerging as the world’s leading industrial nation. It ends as 20th-century political analysis, in which Kanigel describes the almost accidental way Taylor was rediscovered and became synonymous with American efficiency.

Frederick Taylor was not only a management consultant before the profession had a name, he was also one of the world’s first PR men. He was both a cagey self-promoter and a naive true believer—a frequently dynamic combina-

tion. But by 1910, he had fallen into semiretirement, always ready to give a public lecture or expostulate to disciples at home, but spending most of his time perfecting the one best golf club.

Then, in 1910 the railroads applied for a fare raise—in the glory days of American capitalism, nobody talked about deregulation—and the liberal railroad commissioner and later U.S. Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis insisted that they cut costs through improved efficiency before seeking more money from consumers. To that end, he prescribed the services of Frederick Winslow Taylor. That was the beginning of Taylor’s comeback. Less than a decade later, Lenin was declaring Scientific Management the official ideology of Russian industrialization. (Another one of those half-assed Taylorists, it turned out.)

Remarkably, the reaction against Taylor grew almost as fast as his fame. The same year that the Railroad Commission called Taylor out of retirement, the Army Arsenal in Watertown, Mass., was ordered Taylorized. As the stop-watchers took their places behind the mechanics, the men walked out one by one, in what turned into a sensational strike against Scientific Management and the U.S. government. Congressional hearings and public debate over the arsenal walkout evoked surprisingly cogent class analysis. AFL President Samuel Gompers testified that the Taylor system spelled higher production of “goods and things, but in so far as the men are concerned, it means destruction.” What Taylor deemed wasted motion, he said, “is frequently that moment when the divine spark of new thought” comes to a worker. Had James Watt not had the leisure “to watch the kettle boil, we might not have known the power of steam.”

Workers who experienced Taylorism spoke more directly. When a striking molder at the arsenal was asked what was

so un-American about having a stopwatch used on him, especially since it might give him the chance to earn higher rates through piecework, the molder replied that the problem was that it drove you toward the big money "and in the course of time [you] cannot stand it." He would go home and find that he was all tired out and did not feel like going anywhere. "Whereas while working by the day," he said, "I feel as though there was something to live for, and feel like going out for a walk evenings."

Perhaps the odd thing is not, after all, how quickly these workers saw what Taylorism would mean for them and walked out, but how slow today's piecework programmers and electronically monitored managers are to understand that the relentless push for efficiency is the reason they are unable to do anything after they leave work but stare at another screen.

For the updated 1994 edition of *All the Livelong Day: The Meaning and Demeaning of Routine Work*, I was able

to collect a few stories from computer clerks and typists who'd learned how to foil electronic monitoring systems. They were beginning to devise the kinds of games and strategies that industrial workers have long used to give themselves a sense of purpose or at least to keep from going crazy on Taylorized jobs. But as the major historian of 20th-century Taylorism (if only by default), I have distressingly little dramatic resistance to report.

But Kanigel is a biographer, not a class-war correspondent. As such, he's done a remarkable job being fair to Taylor, fair to the people he Taylorized during his lifetime, and fair to the millions—you and me included—who've chafed against Taylorism for more than 100 years now. ◀

Barbara Carson is the author of *All the Livelong Day: The Meaning and Demeaning of Routine Work* and *The Electronic Sweatshop: How Computers Are Transforming the Office of the Future into the Factory of the Past* (both from Penguin).

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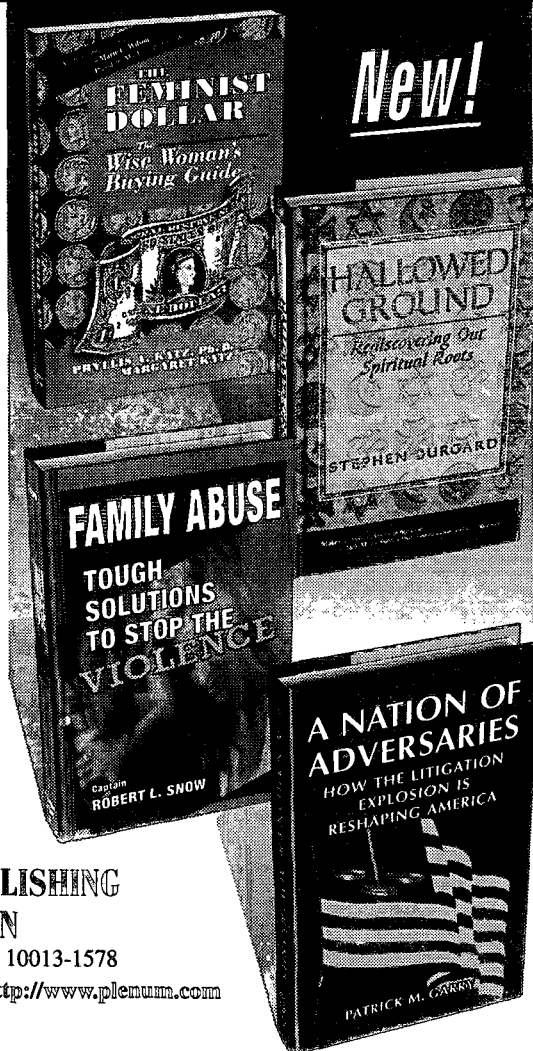
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The Russian counterrevolution

By Boris Kagarlitsky

Since 1991, several dozen books have been written about the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Every foreign correspondent who spends two or three years in Moscow, it seems, goes home to publish a book about this strange country and its incomprehensible inhabitants. It might appear that the theme has been exhausted, and that everything there is to say has now been said. But this is not the case; both in Russia and the West discussion about what happened to the U.S.S.R. continues—or, to be more precise, is still just beginning.

David Kotz is an American economist working at the University of Massachusetts, and Fred Weir is a Canadian journalist who has lived in Moscow for the past 10 years, writing daily reports for the *Hindustan Times* in India, as well as for the Canadian press. (He is also a contributing editor at *In These Times*.) Their new book is frankly polemical: It is aimed squarely at the myths that prevail in Western and to some degree in post-Soviet debates about the end of Communism. In the West, the press has been inclined to attribute the fall of the Soviet Union to the unsoundness of its economy, and more broadly to the bankruptcy of socialist principles in general. These claims are usually fleshed out with stories about outbursts of popular protest, which toppled the system from within.

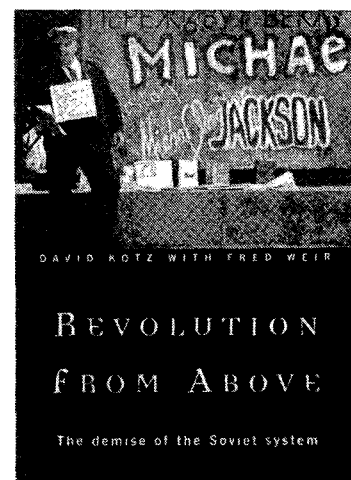
There were, indeed, strikes and demonstrations in the years from 1989 to 1991, but there have been far more in the years since. Work stoppages and hunger strikes occur daily in modern Russia, but almost no one in official circles pays attention to them. Coal miners live from strike to strike, but rarely receive their wages in full. It is curious that Yeltsin's "democratic" regime should have been able to ignore countless manifestations of popular discontent for five years, while the fearsome communist system collapsed like a house of cards as a result of two miners' strikes and a few demonstrations in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

Within Russia itself, no one supports the theory of a mass anti-communist movement; such a notion is too obviously contradicted by the facts. Among some Russian writers, however, there is an analogous theory that centers on conspiracy and treachery by the elite. Communist and national-

ist newspapers publish stories describing how various figures within the Soviet hierarchy were bribed by Western intelligence services and how Western agents carried out subversive operations. But even if these conspiracies were real, they would explain nothing. Throughout the history of the U.S.S.R. there were innumerable anti-Soviet conspiracies. All of them failed. Why, on this occasion, was the subversive activity of the West so stunningly successful? As Kotz and Weir point out, it is also worth noting that the CIA suffered as a result of this supposed success, since it was accused of having systematically exaggerated the strength and stability of the Soviet system.

Nor does the theory that the U.S.S.R. suffered an economic collapse stand up to serious scrutiny. Russia since 1991 has undergone an economic crisis many times more severe than the one it experienced in 1990 and 1991. Moreover, the economic woes of 1990 and 1991 had their origins not so much in the decay of the system as in the first ill-conceived efforts to reform it. The Western economists who now write about the collapse of the Soviet economy were inclined to give it high marks in the '60s and '70s. Analyzing the development of the Soviet economy throughout its history, Kotz and Weir argue that the crisis of the system was the result not of fundamental bankruptcy, but of its achievements. The hypercentralized mobilization economy, in which control over all resources was concentrated in the hands of the state, successfully defeated the Germans in World War II and transformed a backward agrarian state into a superpower possessing not only military, but also industrial and scientific might. However, the same hypercentralized system began showing signs of stress once it was faced with managing a modern economy rather than creating one from scratch. It is one thing to build a factory on a bare field, quite another to come up with a long-term program for its technological development, for the retraining of workers and so forth. The fall in growth rates was accompanied by a decline in the ability of the Soviet leadership to control the functioning of the system, and this crisis of management in turn led to the spread of corruption and the growth of organized crime.

"Despite these failings, we have seen that the Soviet economy managed to bring very rapid growth for many decades," Kotz and Weir conclude. "How-



**Revolution from Above:
The Demise of the Soviet System**
By David M. Kotz and Fred Weir
Routledge
301 pp., \$26.50

ever, although it continued to produce some economic growth down to the end, in its last 15 years the system suffered a serious deterioration in its economic performance." In these circumstances, the bureaucratic elite began to search for new methods of sustaining its rule, and it soon found them. "The Soviet system met its end not because the economy stopped working, but because a political coalition arose and gained power which was dedicated to replacing it with capitalism," Kotz and Weir write. But unlike the supporters of the conspiracy theory, Kotz and Weir show that the "treachery" of the elites had profound social causes and was predetermined by the character of the development which had preceded it. It should be noted that this prospect was outlined by Leon Trotsky in *The Revolution Betrayed*. Trotsky hoped that the rebirth of the Russian proletariat and a political revolution would stop events from following this course. However, the system proved far more stable than the great revolutionary had supposed. It was precisely this which ultimately made the restoration of capitalism inevitable.

Kotz and Weir point out that the turn to capitalism did not occur immediately, and that the bureaucracy itself was far from united. The authors distinguish three tendencies within the Russian elite: supporters of capitalism; conservatives who tried to preserve the system with only minimal changes; and supporters of democratic socialism. Kotz and Weir place Mikhail Gorbachev in the last of these camps. Unfortunately, after fighting so successfully against myth-making, the authors here succumb to a myth themselves. Gorbachev did, indeed, speak of democratic socialism, but for a long time socialist and even communist rhetoric was not alien to Yeltsin either. Gorbachev expressed the general moods of the ruling bureaucracy and shared its goals. Otherwise, he would never have become leader of the Soviet Union.

There was good reason for the ruling elite to initially frame its goals in terms of democratic socialism. A process of transition was needed; public opinion had to be prepared for the restoration of capitalism. Moreover, the Soviet leadership was by no means capable of immediately formulating its new priorities. It was Gorbachev who prepared the path most members of the elite were soon to follow. Despite the socialist rhetoric, Gorbachev's general goals differed little from Yeltsin's. Both emphasized privatizing the economy, turning the country into a junior partner of the West, and integrating it into the world capitalist system as a supplier of raw materials and cheap labor power.

Unlike Yeltsin, Gorbachev would have preferred a gradual transition to capitalism while maintaining many of the familiar features of the Soviet system, such as job security, public housing, and free education and health care. But the policy of gradual reform failed. Later, Yeltsin's Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin would bluntly explain why: "Reforms are lethal and that kind of thing cannot be done gradually."

Gorbachev discovered this the hard way. It was Gorbachev who signed the unequal agreements with the West that Yeltsin later fulfilled. And it was Gorbachev who intro-

duced the post of president of the U.S.S.R., signifying a rejection of bureaucratic collegialism in favor of a system of personal power. But by 1990, with the Communist Party still in power, a large majority of the official elite described capitalism as the best social system, according to surveys analyzed by Kotz and Weir. When Gorbachev refused to move further (reasonably expecting that in the emerging capitalism there would be no space for his "socialist charity"), his supporters started crossing over to Yeltsin in large numbers. Then Gorbachev, who from 1987 to 1989 had practically forgotten the word "socialism," finally remembered it again as he tried to present himself as the guardian of Soviet traditions. Gorbachev made a real effort to preserve the U.S.S.R., but only so long as this promised to allow him to retain his post. When he was faced in December 1991 with the choice of capitulating to Yeltsin or of convening the Congress of People's Deputies of the U.S.S.R., which would have provided a chance of preserving the union, but which for him personally would have meant almost certain impeachment, he unhesitatingly chose capitulation. The country has not forgiven its former president. Proof of this is provided by the 1996 elections, in which he failed to attract even 1 percent of the vote.

The idealization of Gorbachev is the only serious flaw in Kotz and Weir's analysis. Readers of their book will find a great deal of information on the real state of affairs in the Russian economy and the results of "shock therapy"; on the transformations post-Soviet society has undergone; and on

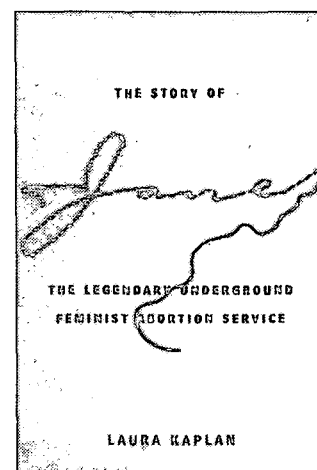
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the government and the opposition. It is not only the Soviet system that has collapsed over the past 10 years. The policies of neoliberal reform have failed as well. In the long run, the question of socialism remains as pressing as ever. But this question can only be discussed in a serious manner if the "Russian lesson" is properly understood. This is why *Revolution from Above* will be as valuable for Western radicals as for Russians and students of Russian history.

For the present, though, the authors see Russia's future in somber tones. A continuation of the current course will turn Russia into a Third World country with an authoritarian government, a far smaller economy, and its scientific establishment in ruins. The population will shrink steadily. The only peculiarity that now distinguishes Russia from other debtors to the International Monetary Fund is that in a cold climate it is impossible to survive on Brazilian-level wages. (The Subtropical Russia Movement demands the introduction by decree of a Latin American climate, and as soon as this is done, of a new social and economic system. This would also be Latin American in character, and would also be introduced by decree.) The centrist alternative—represented by the Civil Union of Arkady Volsky, official trade unions and some enlightened bureaucrats in Yeltsin's camp—involves replacing liberal with nationalist rhetoric and moving in the direction of some kind of state capitalism, more or less like the system that existed in Russia before the October Revolution. Meanwhile, the left alternative urged by the Communist Party of the Russian Federation differs scarcely at all from the centrist one. The only distinguishing point is an even more lavish use of nationalist rhetoric, combined with greater efforts to please the West. Russia needs a real left alternative, but nothing of the sort presently exists,

perhaps because the majority of the population has yet to recover from the psychological shock of perestroika.

It's easy to imagine what a left program would call for: a mixed economy dominated by a strong, decentralized public sector. This would represent a real alternative, even if it's a long way from socialism. But today's Russian state could never create a system of accountable public enterprises—instead, it would simply be more prey for the same rapacious combination of former Soviet officials and organized criminals who devoured its predecessor. That is why any return to public property first requires a radical transformation of the state. Real political democracy and meaningful elections must somehow be put in place, and the system of private power must be replaced by institutions controlled by the public. This all looks very much like bourgeois democracy—but that is exactly the Russian paradox. The introduction of capitalism in a country without a bourgeoisie was and is incompatible with proper democratic institutions. That is why Yeltsin had to shell the parliament, and that is why Russia now has a constitution which is closer to that of Czarist Russia than to that of any Western democracy.

Meanwhile, Russians are studying the reports of Yeltsin's illness with curiosity, and are waiting for the next power shift just as they waited for the deaths of Brezhnev, Andropov and Chernenko. The appearance of a new leader in Russia always means big changes. When Yeltsin finally goes, perhaps there will be a new perestroika. The last perestroika ultimately transformed the Soviet system into capitalism. It will be interesting to see what a future perestroika will bring us. ◀

Boris Kagarlitsky was a deputy to the Moscow City Soviet from 1990 to 1993, and is now a researcher at the Institute of Comparative Political Studies of the Russian Academy of Science. His most recent book is *Restoration in Russia: Why Capitalism Failed* (Verso).

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The Charmer meets the Messenger

By Salim Muwakkil

The Nation of Islam is perhaps the most influential black organization of the 20th century. From its mysterious origin in Depression-era Detroit to its position as the largest and most disciplined black nationalist organization in the country, the NOI has long been a powerful presence in black America. Yet little has been written on the group many know best as the Black Muslims. For many years, there were only two books that offered anything like a comprehensive account of the NOI: *The Black Muslims in America*, a 1961 book by C. Eric Lincoln, and *Black Nationalism*, published the next year by Nigerian political scientist E. U. Essien-Udom.

That situation is finally changing, however; the high public profile of NOI head Minister Louis Farrakhan and the unprecedented success of his Million Man March have provoked increased interest in the group and its charismatic leader. Assessments both laudatory and critical of this national presence are now pouring out of major publishing houses.

Prophet of Rage: A Life of Louis Farrakhan and His Nation, by Arthur J. Magida, and *In the Name of Elijah Muhammad: Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam*, by Mattias Gardell, are two of the earliest offerings in a coming avalanche of Farrakhan-themed tomes. By default, both books are path-breaking.

Magida's *Prophet of Rage* is the first book to make even a half-hearted attempt at a Farrakhan biography. Although Magida is the editorial director for Jewish Lights Publishing and a former senior editor of the *Baltimore Jewish Times*, he provides a balanced account of the life of a man many Jews regard as the spiritual offspring of Hitler. Based on, among other things, an unusual several-hour interview, the book chronicles the life of this controversial American original, from his birth in the Bronx on May 11, 1933, as Louis Eugene Walcott, to the disappointing aftermath of his 1995 Million Man March triumph as Louis Farrakhan.

Magida reveals the young Farrakhan as a precocious and

popular youth who excelled at his church and at school in Boston's Roxbury neighborhood, where his family moved shortly after his birth. Farrakhan's father disappeared before he was born, and his stepfather left a few years after the family moved to Boston. His mother was a Caribbean immigrant who gravitated toward the teaching of Jamaican black nationalist Marcus Garvey, influencing Farrakhan's racial consciousness in his youth.

Magida does a fine job of evoking the rhythms and spirit of the predominantly West Indian community in Boston that nurtured the Walcott family. He also interviewed long-time residents who remembered the family and particularly the exploits of the talented young Farrakhan. Much of what he recounts is wildly at odds with the public perception of Farrakhan as a raging anti-Semite with nothing but contempt for white America. The history of Gene (as everyone called him) Walcott is that of a well-mannered child and an accomplished adolescent. In his late teens, he was a successful violinist, a track star and an honor student. His talent on the violin earned him an appearance on the national television show *The Ted Mack Original Amateur Hour*. Later in his teens, he became attracted to show business, transforming himself into "the Charmer," an urbane calypso musician. After high school, he attended a teachers college in the South for a while, but soon resumed his show-business career. Then in 1955, while visiting Chicago for a gig, "the Charmer" heard "the Messenger," Elijah Muhammad, and was changed forever.

Magida's account of that transformation is well-written and reasonably objective. He follows the enigmatic Black Muslim minister from Boston to New York to Chicago, perceptively noting the changes along the way. He offers a short synopsis of the NOI's beginnings and some information about its belief system and its positive record of rehabilitating former convicts. This is followed by a brief account of patriarch Elijah Muhammad's death, the changes wrought by



Prophet of Rage: A Life of Louis Farrakhan and His Nation

By Arthur J. Magida
Basic Books
264 pp., \$25

In the Name of Elijah Muhammad: Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam
By Mattias Gardell
Duke University Press
520 pp., paper \$19.95, cloth \$49.95

his successor son, Warithuddin (born Wallace Delaney) Muhammad, and the distress those doctrinal alterations caused Farrakhan. Much of Magida's analysis is necessarily superficial (for example, he fails to situate Farrakhan's NOI within the larger context of black nationalism, and he virtually omits the U.S. government's relentless efforts to undermine and "neutralize" the group), but he still manages to register some important insights.

If Magida's book leaves the reader frustrated with its too-brief discussion of the NOI's origins and the context that framed it, Gardell's *In the Name of Elijah Muhammad: Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam* is the solution. This is the book for anyone seeking comprehensive information on the Nation of Islam and its history, ideology, relations, roles and functions. Where Magida focuses primarily on Farrakhan and his impact, Gardell presents a more panoramic portrayal of the movement.

The book is a part of the "C. Eric Lincoln Series on the Black Experience," published by Duke University Press; the author is a professor of theology at Uppsala University in Sweden. Gardell's status as outsider provides him with an objective perch from which to study the NOI. What's more, he uses what he calls "a hermeneutically oriented emic perspective" to present his case: "When I, for instance, write that 'God came in the person of Master Farad Muhammad,' this does not mean that I necessarily subscribe to what is stated, only that believers do. To prefix each matter of belief with an 'according to' would ... be an implicit way to take exception to the 'bizarre beliefs' of the Other."

This approach is initially somewhat off-putting, but the reader soon becomes accustomed to a narrative style that eschews skeptical asides and other distancing techniques. Gardell apparently has no ax to grind nor any constituency to appease, so his views on Farrakhan and the NOI are not weighted with ideological allegiances or distorted by popular prejudices. So, although it suffers no lack of analytical rigor, the book comes across as somewhat sympathetic to the movement.

In 10 chapters Gardell takes us through the emergence of ideological black nationalism, the venerable history of Islam in black America, the predecessors and Islamic currents that led to the birth of the NOI, the federal conspiracy to neutralize the NOI, the death of Elijah Muhammad and the group's subsequent "fall," and the NOI's resurrection under Farrakhan's leadership. *In the Name of Elijah Muhammad* also provides a comprehensive discussion of the theology and philosophy surrounding what Gardell terms the NOI's "black Gnosis," and he links the NOI with similar international movements—including the Libyan Jamahiriya of Muammar Khadafi.

In addition, this exhaustively researched volume provides information about NOI offshoots, subsidiaries and divergences, about which even close observers may be unaware. Gardell writes informatively about the Lost

Found Nation of Islam, led by Silis Muhammad, the Nubian Islamic Hebrews, led by Sayyid Isa al-Mahdi, and the Five Percent Nation, led by the late Clarence 13X (Father Allah). He details theological differences among these groups and carefully explicates the doctrinal conflicts between the NOI's "black Gnosis" tradition and so-called orthodox Islam.

Like Magida, Gardell devotes considerable space to the strained relationship between the NOI, black Christians and Jewish Americans. In a chapter entitled "The Strained Seeds of Abraham: Is the NOI an Anti-Christian, Anti-Semitic Nazi Cult?" Gardell gives this answer: "It's difficult to determine where on a political scale Farrakhan and the NOI should be placed. As a religio-political ideologist, Farrakhan moves in a different universe than secular politicians, making the left-right scale an inadequate tool of classification." Farrakhan adopts political positions both to the right and to the left. He supports Fidel Castro's Cuba, liberation movements in the Third World and struggles to end the exploitation of the poor, all sentiments usually identified with the left.

But, Gardell notes, Farrakhan also "voices traditional conservative and extremist nationalist themes. The NOI hails God, nation and the nuclear family. They oppose the pro-choice stand on abortion, denounce homosexuality, subscribe to a conservative view on gender relations. ... As in the theories of fascism and Nazism, the individual is always subordinate to the abstract greater body, the nation or the race."

"While black Christian clergy ponder over why the new generation is absent from the church, black youths gather by the thousands to listen to the sermons delivered by Minister Farrakhan," Gardell writes. He spends much of his final chapter on the relationship between hip-hop and the NOI. In fact, he attempts to explain this subject so thoroughly that some readers may be put off by the pages he devotes to such arcana as the fact that "even though some bands support Imam Warithuddin Muhammad, such as Divine Styler, or adhere to the Five Percent Nation of Islam, such as Queen Latifah, Lakim Shabazz, Poor Righteous Teachers and Brand Nubian, they are also influenced by the teachings of Minister Louis Farrakhan ... as are Public Enemy, Ice Cube, KAM, Professor Griff, MC Ren, Big Daddy Kane, Paris, Mister Cee and K-Solo."

But Gardell's perspective is a useful corrective to the chilly analysis of scholars trained to ignore popular expressions in their evaluations. Together, he and Magida provide welcome additions to the paucity of information on this extremely important organization. Magida may incur the wrath of many Jews for not being severe enough in his judgments of Farrakhan, but his restrained rendering will gain more admirers than detractors as time goes on. Gardell's book is an extraordinary work and a vital corrective to the dearth of scholarship on this particular corner of American history. ◀



Will the real Jefferson stand up?

By Daniel Lazare

What is this hold that Thomas Jefferson has on the American imagination? After documentaries about baseball and the Civil War, why did Ken Burns choose to make a PBS special about Jefferson rather than Washington, Benjamin Franklin or a truly fascinating figure like Alexander Hamilton? Why, moreover, was the film so reverential you could practically hear the church bells and smell the incense?

The answer is not hard to figure out. Jefferson wrote the bulk of the Declaration of Independence, which, although no one was quite aware of it at the time, turned out to be the founding document of the American republic. Although he was not present at the Constitutional Convention of 1787, his influence was felt via his protégé James Madison, who, more than anyone else, helped guide the convention through to completion. Jefferson pushed for a Bill of Rights and then, following "the revolution of 1800," worked to strengthen constitutional provisions involving limited government, separation of powers, and checks and balances so dear to his Old Whig ideology. While sometimes portrayed as a champion of popular sovereignty, what Jefferson really championed was individual sovereignty vis-à-vis government, which is why everyone from Newt Gingrich to Jerry Brown nowadays invokes his name. Not only is William Jefferson Clinton convinced of Jefferson's greatness, but he believes the Supreme Being is as well. Referring to the curious coincidence that Jefferson and John Adams expired within hours of one another on July 4, 1826, Clinton declared at the White House screening of Ken Burns' documentary: "I always thought that the fact that both of them died on the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence was the best evidence the modern world has on the question of whether God is. It is impossible to believe this happened by accident."

Given an endorsement like this, who could possibly disagree?

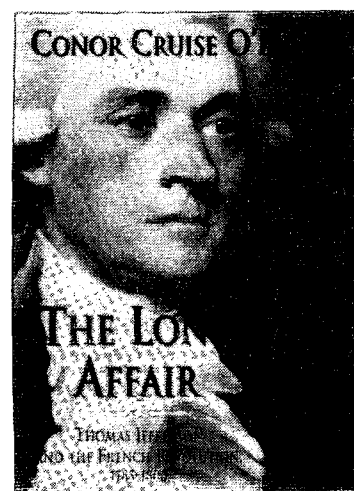
In fact, a growing number of people do. Despite the piety surrounding Jefferson's memory, a very different image has been taking shape since the '60s. Rather than individual sovereignty, the only sovereignty that Jefferson could conceive of, the revisionist view holds, was the sovereignty of

the individual slaveholder over the individual slave. His fear of government was so indiscriminate as to verge on paranoia. His concept of freedom was so negative as to verge on the antisocial. What his political vision boiled down to was the freedom of the lone white male to exist in splendid isolation from society at large, a concept that places him far closer to modern libertarians than to social democrats, who believe that freedom ultimately means the ability of the demos as a whole to reorder its political surroundings however it may wish.

Not that Conor Cruise O'Brien, the author of the most bracing attack on Jefferson in years, is a social democrat, not by a long shot. As the most prominent modern apologist for the works of Edmund Burke, the late 18th-century Whig who inveighed against rationalism, democracy, Jewish moneychangers and the "swinish multitude," O'Brien's politics are repellent to anyone to the left of, say, Martin Peretz. Ultimately, his brief against Jefferson boils down to the single-minded complaint that Jefferson supported the French Revolution and befriended Tom Paine, author of *Common Sense*, *Rights of Man* and *The Age of Reason*. Since Paine loathed Burke, O'Brien loathes Paine, and therefore Jefferson as well. As we used to say in freshman geometry, Q.E.D.

This is silly stuff. Nonetheless, Burkean conservatism aside, *The Long Affair* advances a powerful argument: Jefferson embraced the French Revolution not so much because of the revolution's principles as because it served him as a battering ram against the Federalists back home in the United States. He took up the cause of the Parisian sans-culottes because, in a transatlantic comedy of errors, he came to identify them with beleaguered Virginia planters struggling against the capitalist hegemony that Washington, Hamilton and the rest were in the process of imposing.

As O'Brien tells it, Jefferson's attitude toward France and the French Revolution evolved in stages. The first ran from 1784, when he succeeded Benjamin Franklin as ambassador to the court of Louis XVI, to 1789.



The Long Affair: Thomas Jefferson and the French Revolution, 1785-1800

By Conor Cruise O'Brien
University of Chicago Press
367 pp., \$29.95

American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson
By Joseph J. Ellis
Alfred A. Knopf
365 pp., \$26

Despite his love for French wine and cookery, Jefferson was very much the homesick Virginian whose attitude toward French society, including the *philosophes* he came to be so much identified with, was more than a bit contemptuous. Where Franklin had reveled in the company of the *philosophes*, Jefferson was cool and reserved. When the monarchy began to crumble in 1787, he initially cast his lot with aristocrats like his friend the Marquis de Lafayette, who favored a return to a chimerical balanced constitution of yesteryear in which power would be shared evenly between the crown, the nobility and the commons. Rather than the overthrow of Louis XVI, whom he personally rather admired, Jefferson favored a compromise leading to a political system midway between the British and the American.

Jefferson's attitude shifted when he left Paris in September 1789 and headed back home. His identification with the French Revolution blossomed during the next few years because, O'Brien argues, it fitted in so well with his domestic goals. It allowed him to denounce Hamilton as an aristocrat, to equate him with the disgraced *ancien régime* in France, and to attack each and every federal initiative as tending toward tyranny. As Jefferson was well aware, this was a sure-fire vote-getter in a society in which popular support for the French republican cause ran high and suspicions of federal power were explosive, particularly among Southern planters and Western farmers. *Liberté*, in his hands, was defined in wholly negative terms as liberty from taxation and energetic government.

The third stage in Jefferson's relationship with the French revolution began in 1793-94, when his revolutionary passion cooled and he temporarily withdrew from politics. One reason for this was the disastrous mission of Charles-Edmond Genet, France's newly appointed ambassador to the United States. Genet high-handedly ordered U.S. officials about as if they were French provincials, threatened to appeal over Washington's head to Congress, and tried to rope America into a naval war against Britain. When Washington reacted angrily, not only to Genet but to all those *Marseillaise*-singing Westerners and Southerners, Jefferson, realizing that Genet was fast becoming a political liability, toned down the rhetoric and backed off.

Yet, as O'Brien points out, Jefferson's passion was starting to cool for a more important reason than political expediency: the Haitian Revolution, which broke out in August 1791. When the revolution seemed to be no more than a revolt by a thin layer of poor whites against an even narrower stratum of planter-aristocrats, Jefferson was enthusiastic; he devoutly hoped that the aristocrats would be exiled to the United States where they would learn the republican

virtues of liberty and equality. But when Haiti's huge slave population entered the fray, turning a petty revolt into a genuine revolution, Jefferson panicked. Where a few years earlier he had confidently declared that nothing was wrong with a little popular rebellion now and then, by 1797 he was giving vent to terror-stricken fantasies about a "revolutionary storm, now sweeping the globe, [that] will be upon us," leading to "bloody scenes" in which white folks would be slaughtered in their beds.



It was not just Jefferson who reacted this way, but an entire Southern planter class seized with terror that the Haitian flames might soon spread to the North American mainland. While Federalists like Alexander Hamilton, John Adams and his son John Quincy Adams supported the Haitian revolutionary leader Toussaint L'Ouverture to the point of providing him naval support in Haiti's wars, Jefferson froze relations with the infant black republic when he became president in

1801, encouraged Napoleon in his doomed effort to recapture the island and then imposed a trade embargo aimed at starving it when Bonaparte failed. As an arch-segregationist who believed that the only solution to slavery was the expulsion of black people from the American mainland, Jefferson might plausibly have supported the Haitian republic as a haven for ex-slaves. Instead, his attitude was one of unrelenting hostility. Aware that Napoleon would be unlikely to part with Louisiana if he regained control of Haiti, Jefferson was nonetheless willing to jeopardize his precious goal of westward expansion to reimpose slavery in the Caribbean.

As historian Michael Zuckerman observed (in a quote that O'Brien garbles slightly), "It was the Federalists who held far more closely to the faith of the founders and the Jeffersonian Republicans who tried far more tenaciously to tether and traduce the will of the people. It was the Federalists who were keen to aid the oppressed in their effort at independence and the Republicans who resisted that effort. It was the Federalists who fostered freedom and Republicans who attempted the restoration of a colonial regime and, indeed, the reimposition of slavery itself."

So much for the myth of the Jeffersonians as the friend of the people and the Hamiltonians as the enemy.

O'Brien tells this part of the story very well. Not unlike his hero Edmund Burke, he is politically astute, highly sensitive to class dynamics and impatient with sentiment and cant—at least on the part of his opponents. Because he views the Jacobins as devils incarnate, though, he mishandles another aspect of the saga, that of the Federalist relationship with the French Revolution, which was no less ironic.

Washington and Hamilton were indeed hostile to Genet

when he tried to turn Americans against the new federal government. But Genet was a Girondin, a member of the revolution's moderate wing, and was, like all Girondins, noisy, passionate and histrionic. On the other hand, Washington and Hamilton got along much better with Genet's successor, Joseph Fauchet, who, as a Jacobin, was cooler and more intellectual, and who saw no purpose in trying to foment civil war between Southern planters and Northern financiers.

O'Brien attempts to portray Hamilton as a Burkean moderate (no less an oxymoron than "liberal Jeffersonian"), but in reality Hamilton had more in common with the radical wing of the French Revolution than he himself realized. Like the Jacobins, Hamilton was an urbanizer, an industrializer and a centralist. Like the Jacobins, he believed in a sovereign national government with unqualified power to override the states and localities whenever it wished. His belief in black equality—he helped found the first anti-slavery society in New York—also placed him closer to the Jacobin camp than to the Jeffersonians and Girondins.

Finally, Hamilton thoroughly partook in the Jacobin dream of remaking society from top to bottom. He envisioned an America a century hence that would be completely transformed in its politics and economics, its intellectual structure and its social mores. Jefferson, on the other hand, envisioned a still-agrarian America that would be geographically larger but otherwise unchanged. As Robert R. Palmer, one of the few modern American historians to write sensibly on the subject, put it, Jefferson was a reactionary democrat of a type all too common in the late 18th century, one who believed that liberty and equality were best achieved by returning to some fabled Ancient Constitution under which peasants and lords respected one another and lived together in harmony. So if Hamilton was a closet Jacobin, Jefferson and Burke, another believer in long lost golden ages, had more in common than O'Brien recognizes.

O'Brien's book is angry, intemperate and all the more admirable as a result. As one might expect of a former dean of faculty at West Point, Joseph J. Ellis' *American Sphinx* is the opposite: balanced in its criticism, judicious and ultimately less satisfying. Where O'Brien is remorseless in hunting down his prey, Ellis often comes across as an apologist. For example, he writes that Jefferson's failure as governor to defend Virginia against a British force in 1781 was "probably beyond his or anybody's control." It's true that Virginia's state government was too weak to stand up to the rigors of modern warfare—but Jefferson helped design that state government back in 1776. Jefferson's support of popular uprisings like Shay's Rebellion in 1786 placed him "far to the left of any responsible political leader of the revolutionary generation," Ellis adds, a judgment he happens to share with the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*. In fact, Jefferson's support for the rebellion had nothing to do with "leftism"; like any number of Southern apologists to follow, he hoped to make use of class tensions up North in order to deflect attention from oppression down South. While conceding that

Sally Hemings' children were obviously fathered by a white man, that several resembled Jefferson, and that she never conceived when he was away from Monticello (as he often was for long periods), he dismisses charges of a liaison between the two on the pseudopsychological grounds that Jefferson "lacked the capacity for the direct and physical expression of his sexual energies."

Where O'Brien's goal is to banish Jefferson from the liberal pantheon, Ellis temporizes. Yes, he admits, Jeffersonian individualism often gives rise to reactionaries like Newt Gingrich, whose strategy is to turn popular discontent against government in general. But then, quoting the historian Robert Wiebe, he adds: "The substantial body of contemporary criticism that singles out individualism as the special curse of American democracy simply flies in the face of its history. Telling Americans to improve democracy by sinking comfortably into community, by losing themselves in a collective life, is calling into the wind. There never has been an American democracy without its powerful strand of individualism, and nothing suggests there ever will be."

This is what American historiography has come to, an elaborate defense of the status quo. America has not changed in certain respects; therefore it never will. Where an Irish conservative sees the necessity of radically revising our political culture, American historians refuse to even admit the possibility. ◀

Daniel Lazare is the author of *The Frozen Republic: How the Constitution Is Paralyzing Democracy* (Harcourt Brace).



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The third degree

By John Palattella

Here's a riddle: In three letters, what is the name of a lengthy and expensive cultural enrichment program for part-time employees in one of the nation's major industries? The answer: the Ph.D.

How can graduate students, you might ask, be part-time employees? They do, of course, teach introductory courses and grade exams for professors, but as part of their vocational training as future professors. Graduate students are apprentices: They are admitted, not hired, by a university, and the money they receive for their labor is a stipend, not a wage.

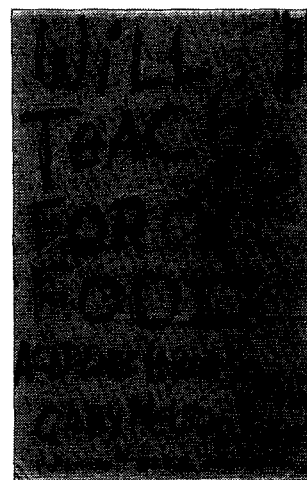
That graduate students are in fact both part-time employees and apprentice scholars, explains Cary Nelson, is a symptom of the labor crisis wreaking havoc on the university. Nelson, a professor of English at the University of Illinois-Urbana, has been chronicling and criticizing the academy's response to this crisis for nearly a decade, and his new books *Manifesto of a Tenured Radical* and *Will Work for Food: Academic Labor in Crisis* offer an indispensable crash course in the deterioration of labor conditions on American campuses. In *Manifesto*, Nelson takes his own discipline of English as a case study of the intersection of labor problems and the culture wars. In *Will Work for Food*, Nelson assembles essays by professors and graduate students from many disciplines, mixing long views of academic labor with post mortems on the failed 1995 grade strike by organized graduate students at Yale.

Graduate students face a bleak future. They are underpaid as apprentices, and the Ph.D. is no longer a ticket to a full-time job. Most newly minted Ph.D.s these days can expect to join the growing legion of freeway faculty shuttling between three or four part-time appointments. The numbers confirm this. Since 1989, due to drastic budget cuts, there has been a sharp downturn in full-time hirings. In English, for instance, the number of advertised full-time positions has plummeted 50 percent; in political science, it's dropped 37 percent. Yet the number of Ph.D.s awarded annually has not tapered off, nor has undergraduate enrollment. The overproduction of Ph.D.s and the elimination of full-time slots have together spawned a buyer's market for cost-conscious administrators eager to fob off courses on

part-timers. According to Ernst Benjamin of the American Association of University Professors, the nation's largest faculty union, in 1970 roughly 22 percent of all faculty nationwide held part-time positions. By 1980, that figure had climbed to 34 percent, and by 1993, to 43 percent.

Fed up with being a source of cheap labor, graduate students are organizing. Graduate student unions exist at 13 state universities, and organization drives are currently underway on half a dozen campuses. In *Will Work for Food*, two kinds of arguments are made in support of graduate student unions. Stephen Watt of Indiana University takes what you might call the rank-and-file line: Unions are necessary if graduate students are to protect their material welfare. Downsizing has transformed a community of scholars into a knowledge factory, and if graduate students, the factory's most exploited employees, want to be treated equitably, they must unionize to gain the protection of collective bargaining. For Watt, reforming the university is out of the question; unions are the only means by which graduate students can resist administrators and professors, their class enemies.

Watt's is a minority view. Most of the contributors to *Will Work for Food* think graduate student unions are more than just collective bargaining units; they are academia's intellectual vanguard. This is the sweetness and light argument. Linking campaigns for economic justice with defenses of the university's mission of enlightenment, unions embody the last best hope for protecting the university from the tides of unreason. Barbara Ehrenreich, for instance, maintains that Yale and other universities must "set an ethical example for the rest of the world by demonstrating what a community can look like if it's based on reason, mutual respect, and commitment to honor each individual's contribution." The university's mission is not to mirror society but to challenge it—and graduate student unions are upholding this mission by demanding that universities, instead of tearing pages from a downsizer's manual, teach the humanities while respecting the humanity of their own employees. In Ehrenreich's view, graduate student unions, by challenging university policies, are trying to uphold one of the university's



Will Work for Food:
Academic Labor in Crisis
Edited by Cary Nelson.
University of Minnesota Press
248 pp., \$19.95

Manifesto of a Tenured Radical
By Cary Nelson
New York University Press.
237 pp., \$17.95



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most cherished ideals, academic freedom.

But this is no easy task. Perhaps the most persuasive piece of evidence in Watt's favor is that the staunchest opponents of unions are often faculty. Both Illinois professor Michael Bérubé, in *Will Work for Food*, and Nelson, in *Manifesto*, make this point by analyzing how Yale faculty responded to the 1995 grade strike. Amazingly, the strike's most outspoken critics were not crusty traditionalists but progressive scholars. Bérubé and Nelson each assemble a remarkable rogues' gallery, including Sara Suleri, postcolonial critic extraordinaire, who urged Yale's dean to reprimand one of her teaching assistants for striking, and progressive labor historian Nancy Cott, who repeatedly denounced organized Yale graduate students. At the December 1995 convention of the American Historical Association, Cott beseeched her fellow historians to imagine how dreadful their lives would be if their graduate students withheld grades.

Nelson and Bérubé single out progressive faculty to impart two lessons. First, the frenzied protestations of the *New Criterion* notwithstanding, the university is hardly teeming with tenured radicals. Though Nelson and Bérubé did not expect self-styled radical scholars to parrot a party line, they could not help but feel flabbergasted by the vindictiveness with which Cott and others attacked the Yale graduate students and their modest platform. (One plank proposed increasing fellowships by \$2,000, to bring them in line with Yale's own estimate of the cost of living in New Haven for one year.) The second lesson is that progressive Yale faculty opposed the strike not on principle, but to guard their sense of privilege. Bérubé, to underscore just how severely privilege has blinded so-called progressive faculty to reality, cites an editorial from, incredibly enough, the *New Criterion*, which condemns the exploitation of graduate students' "cheap labor." What a headline: Neocons

teach tenured radicals about the rights of workers.

Nelson and Bérubé are not alone in deploring Yale's treatment of its graduate students. In February, the National Labor Relations Board filed a formal complaint charging Yale with illegally intimidating graduate students involved in the grade strike. The complaint singles out Yale's president, its provost, its graduate dean and a dozen faculty members for violating federal labor law by threatening or punishing strike participants. The hearing is slated to start April 14. If the NLRB prevails, an important precedent will be established: Graduate students at private universities will gain both the right to unionize and the protection of labor law.

The future of graduate student unions may depend on the outcome of the NLRB hearing. If Yale can't stop grad students from organizing, what university can? Whatever the hearing's outcome, though, academia's labor crisis stems from matters that graduate student unions alone are not equipped to handle. Unions can neither enforce a moratorium on opening new graduate programs nor require existing programs to curtail their admissions. Yet as Nelson suggests in *Manifesto*, both these policies are crucial for combating a major cause of despair among job-seekers: the glut of new Ph.D.s.

What's more, partisans of grad student unions often talk as though academia's problems are limited to questions of collective bargaining and job security. This explains their well-intentioned arguments on how unions can rejuvenate the ivory tower with sweet reason and transform it into a model workplace. But as anyone who has spent time there can affirm, the academy is plagued by an anti-intellectualism unions cannot dispel. "For decades," contends Nelson, "academe has fostered an idiot-savant culture among its faculty. A professor maintains eloquent expertise in a subdisciplinary specialization and comical ignorance about every other area of life." For the contributors of *Will Work for Food*, the

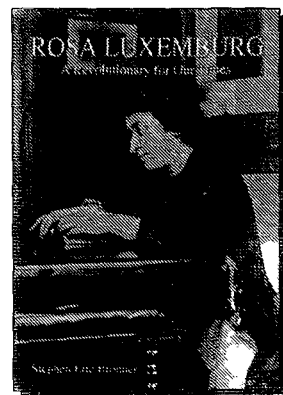
see-no-evil reaction of faculty to how a bottom-line mentality bankrupts higher education merely exacerbates labor problems. But how to eradicate this idiot-savant culture? On this question, Nelson and his contributors are silent.

Last December, CUNY English professor Louis Menand caused a stir when he published his proposal for revamping graduate education in *The New York Times Magazine*. Like Nelson, Menand is appalled by academia's economic crisis and intellectual aimlessness. "Academic professionalism has never been more intense, but the point of all the rigor is less and less self-evident," Menand writes. Graduate students crank out publications to bolster their credentials, yet most of this work goes unread, and the prestige of publication no longer secures job-hunters a competitive edge. To alleviate this situation, Menand proposes scrapping graduate-student teaching along with the dissertation—so that earning a doctorate would be like getting a law degree. Students would take three years to earn a degree instead of eight years, and they would immerse themselves in core coursework, not esoteric scholarship. Graduate education would better prepare students for a nonacademic milieu because it would be less professionalized; graduate students would not be apprentice idiot savants. And the academic world, Menand offers, "would be enlivened if it conceived of its purpose as something larger and more various than mere professional production."

Menand's observations about professionalism are all too accurate, but his proposed reforms, while eminently reasonable, do beg some crucial questions. If graduate students no longer teach bread-and-butter courses, who will? The university administrators Nelson describes are not about to pony up the millions necessary to pay more full-time faculty. Universities would either have to cancel courses, which is highly unlikely since those in question are often undergraduate prerequisites, or pay part-timers paltry wages to teach them. So much for eliminating exploitative labor practices. And where will all these newfangled Ph.D.s land nonacademic jobs? A lucky few may get to practice cultural studies on Madison Avenue or chaos theory on Wall Street, but it's not clear where the rest will turn. Left-leaning think-tanks are not exactly thriving. Nor is it easy to imagine the typical humanities Ph.D. hanging up a shingle: Acme Philosophy—Dialectics Our Specialty.

In *Manifesto*, Nelson relates the story of an unemployed Ph.D. who inhabited a tin cowshed with his wife on the Texas border, where they lived off the land. Such is the dire fate Nelson thinks awaits unemployed Ph.D.s if academic labor conditions don't improve. Were Menand telling the story, he might find instead a moral about the absurdity of professionalism gone haywire: An academic is unemployed and eking out a bare subsistence because he is employable only as an academic. One can only hope that professors learn to listen to both Nelson and Menand. ◀

John Palattella is an assistant editor at *Lingua Franca*, and is the editor of its forthcoming guide to graduate schools.

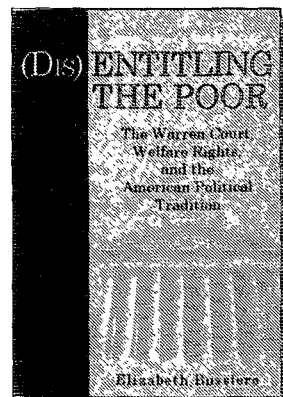


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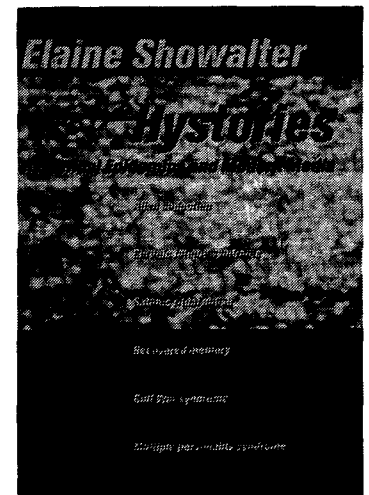


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By Jennifer Schuessler

Today, she argues, those names are recovered memory, multiple personality disorder, satanic ritual abuse and alien abduction—a cluster of interrelated delusions confirmed, and then spread, by sympathetic therapists and sensationalistic media. And, in what are sure to be the most controversial chapters of this book, Showalter tosses Gulf War syndrome and chronic fatigue syndrome into the mix. These enigmatic new ailments, she argues, are utterly without organic basis, though their symptoms are devastatingly

But why does Showalter insist on the hackle-raising label "hysteria," with its faint whiff of quackery, of something stereotypically female—and disreputably sexist—long relegated to the back of the cabinet of Victorian medical curiosities along with spleen and neurasthenia? The answer lies in her twin commitments to Freud and to feminism, and the uneasy but unavoidable traffic between them. Hysteria was crucial to Freud's discovery of psychoanalysis because, in the words of Juliet Mitchell, "it led him to what was universal in psychic construction ... in a particular way—by route of a long and central preoccupation with the difference between the sexes." Hysteria, as Showalter points out, has also been central to the development of feminism, particularly its academic



**Hystories: Hysterical Epidemics
and Modern Media**
By Elaine Showalter
Columbia University Press
244 pp., \$24.95

branch. In the eyes of many male doctors at the turn of the century, each could be seen as a symptom of the other: hysterics were feminists who needed to be transformed back into "normal" women, and feminists were just hysterics who required treatment, not rights.

Just as psychoanalysis itself has fallen out of favor with the medical establishment, so too has this mysterious disorder moved from the asylum to the academy—and especially its women's studies departments, where it has sometimes been reinterpreted positively as a "protolanguage" of women who could not speak out directly against the confinement of their lives. But despite Showalter's credentials as one of the founding mothers of feminist literary criticism, her applied scholarship hasn't made her popular among feminists who believe that women's stories of abuse have too long been written off as so much unconscious wishful thinking. She praises the campaign to confront incest and childhood sexual abuse as "one of the most far-reaching achievements of feminist therapy and the women's movement."

But she clearly doesn't care for the sexual politics behind the adult recovered-memory movement—the anti-sexual victim feminism that denies the powerful, often disturbing desires originating within women themselves—any more than she likes the rigid gender stereotypes that prevent Gulf War syndrome from being seen for what, in her view, it is: male hysteria.

So just what is Showalter talking about when she talks about "hysteria"? As Edward Shorter once remarked, "writing a history of something so amorphous, whose meaning and content keep changing, is like trying to write a history of dirt." Showalter herself puts forth a defeminized



redefinition that leaves none of us looking entirely clean. Hysteria is a "universal response to emotional conflict," not so much a disease as "a body language for people who otherwise might not be able to speak or even to admit what they feel"—be it the old disconcerting sexual desires Freud located at the bottom of nearly everything, the Problem With No Name Betty Freidan found festering in the kitchen, or the lingering aftereffects of trauma like war. In Showalter's view, we urgently need to see hysteria as part of "the universal psychopathology of everyday life," just a bit further along the continuum past stage fright and nervous acne eruptions. "Nous sommes toutes les hystériques!" French

feminists chanted at a 1972 conference in Paris. While Showalter (who confesses to coughing every time she lectures on the subject) may warn of the dangers of feminist overidentification with hysteria, she comes close to saying the same thing.

The first half of *Hystories* is taken up with providing a useful—if somewhat disjointed—theoretical and historical context for hysteria, but the main event is the chapters on the six hysterical epidemics currently afflicting us. Showalter is most persuasive in her chapters on recovered memory, multiple personality disorder, satanic ritual abuse, and alien abduction—the four interrelated hystories founded on the idea that therapists can convert the vaguest of symptoms into abuse narratives ranging from the unlikely to the outlandish. Here, Showalter's originality lies not so much in the diagnosis of hysteria as in the connection she makes between the different strains. Many women who believe they were molested as children will resent being thrown in with those who think they've been forced to bite the heads off live chickens at midnight gatherings of suburban witches, or suffered anal probes at the hands of Tall Greys (as the doctorish male aliens responsible for most abductions are called). But Showalter points to the common themes running through these hystories, which disproportionately affect women: Sexual fantasies are "improper, incorrect, sick," and unruly desires come from somewhere Out There—sometimes way out.

Curiously, Showalter's book contains no description of actual hysterical cures, even by Freud, the great theorist who saw the disorder for what it was. The doctor is always depicted as a partner in hysteria, as much an agent of contagion as a healer.

Still, it's the talking cure Showalter recommends even for patients suffering chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) and Gulf

War syndrome (GWS), and here she faces her toughest sell. In her chapters on these two seemingly related complaints with similarly vague flu-like symptoms, Showalter gives a compressed, dismissive account of the search for physical causes. She writes that "the failure to discover a cause for CFS after millions of dollars of experimental funding doesn't rule out the possibility that there may yet be a cause beyond current medical knowledge," but she's already made her diagnosis: hysteria. As for GWS, it's merely "the next adult phase of expansion for CFS," the equivalent of the "shell shock" suffered by World War I soldiers and the "post-traumatic stress disorder" diagnosed in Vietnam vets. Unlike recovered-memory hysterics, who receive explanations for their symptoms that they, at least, find convincing, CFS and GWS patients are often in an adversarial relationship with doctors. Nonetheless, advocates for these two conditions end up playing the same role as those pushing satanic abuse and alien abduction. Instead of educating people about "how much power emotions have over the body," she argues, the CFS and GWS hystories incorporate the general anti-institutional conspiracy theories of the day.

While there are intriguing parallels among the hystories of all six epidemics, lumping CFS and GWS in with recovered-memory-related complaints seems a bit premature. People with CFS and GWS don't suffer so much from false beliefs about their experience as from debilitating, if often vague and subjective physical symptoms; that's why they seek treatment—and validation—from medical doctors rather than therapists, even when those doctors can't help them. While Showalter rejects the idea that sufferers should be treated by physicians to maintain their self-respect, she recognizes the difficulty of getting patients into therapy. It's true that hysteria has always been defined by physical symptoms. But will people who cannot get out of bed, who break out in mysterious rashes and develop bleeding gums, and who believe they have been exposed to a virus or toxic agent want to talk about their childhoods or their adult emotional experiences? Many of the symptoms Gulf War veterans have reported—shrinking, semen that burns the skin—are clearly hysterical, or even wholly imaginary. But one wonders why it has to be all or nothing, and whether Showalter's own previous commitment to the hysteria diagnosis leads her to rule out the possibility of some organically caused symptoms with a heavy hysterical overlay.

Still, however uneasily these plagues sit together, *Hystories* offers a powerful analysis of what ails us at century's end—and a much-needed gesture toward premillennial deflation. In their 1895 *Studies on Hysteria*, Freud and Josef Breuer famously stated that the aim of psychoanalysis was to "transform neurotic misery into ordinary unhappiness." A hundred years later, Elaine Showalter—for all her ambivalences about the cure—has made a bracing attempt to convert the extraordinary afflictions of our own *fin de siècle* back into ordinary neurotic misery. ◀

Jennifer Schuessler is on the staff of the *New York Review of Books*.

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Worldly wisdom

By David Moberg

Anyone who wants a basic understanding of how the new global economy works—and no one can afford ignorance on the subject—should be grateful for reporter William Greider's brilliant, comprehensive and passionate new book. *One World, Ready or Not: The Manic Logic of Global Capitalism* describes the multiple transformations of contemporary economic life that, whatever their technological and political aspects, are ultimately driven by what Greider describes as the increasingly maniacal mobility of capital.

Greider, who is national affairs editor of *Rolling Stone* and author of *Who Will Tell The People?*, describes a gamut of experiences in the new global economy: skilled but cheap workers in a remote Chinese village making complex components for Boeing; currency traders at their computer screens juggling billions of dollars daily; authoritarian nationalist strategists leading countries like Malaysia from poverty to something called "development"; and hundreds of poorly paid Thai workers burned to death in 1993 at the Kader factory while making toys for American retail giants.

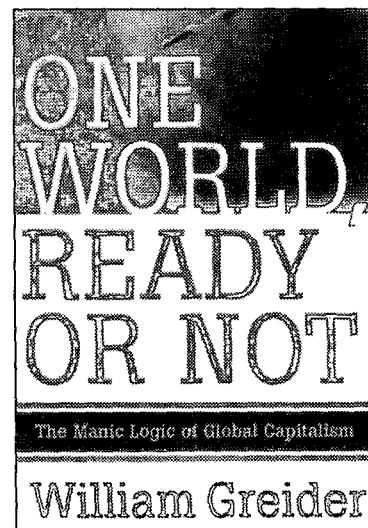
Taken together, Greider's journalistic postcards from the rapidly changing and integrating world of work and business provide a compelling analysis of how economic globalization operates. Under the aegis of transnational corporations, manufacturing has become an operation without borders, locating according to strategies that seek not only cheap labor, but also technological advantage, protection against the vagaries of politics and finance, and, most importantly, access to markets. "Free trade" agreements have facilitated global manufacturing strategies, Greider argues, but only a small fraction of international trade fits the classical definition of free trade. The contemporary global trade regime is really about market access. The 40 percent of trade that is among branches of major transnational corporations is mainly a matter of shipping finished products to sales affiliates abroad. Much of the rest of world trade is driven by the political factors that rule market access. Thus those Boeing components are manufactured in China not only because the labor is cheap, but because the Chinese government refused to buy jet aircraft from Boeing unless it made a sizable investment in the country.

Unlike many critics of globalization, Greider sees even the major industrial corporations as insecure, scurrying to maintain their edge in technology or marketing. One of Greider's key arguments is that as newly industrializing countries become major producers of steel, cars, planes, computer chips and other products, the world's factories start churning out far more than the world's markets can absorb. Businesses try to adapt by cutting costs, so that they can make a profit even when operating at low capacity, or by forming alliances with competitors to minimize risk.

In recent decades the United States has served as the world's "market of last resort." But as American incomes stagnate or decline, Greider asks, where will new consumers come from? Will the global economy stagnate at a level of activity well below its potential?

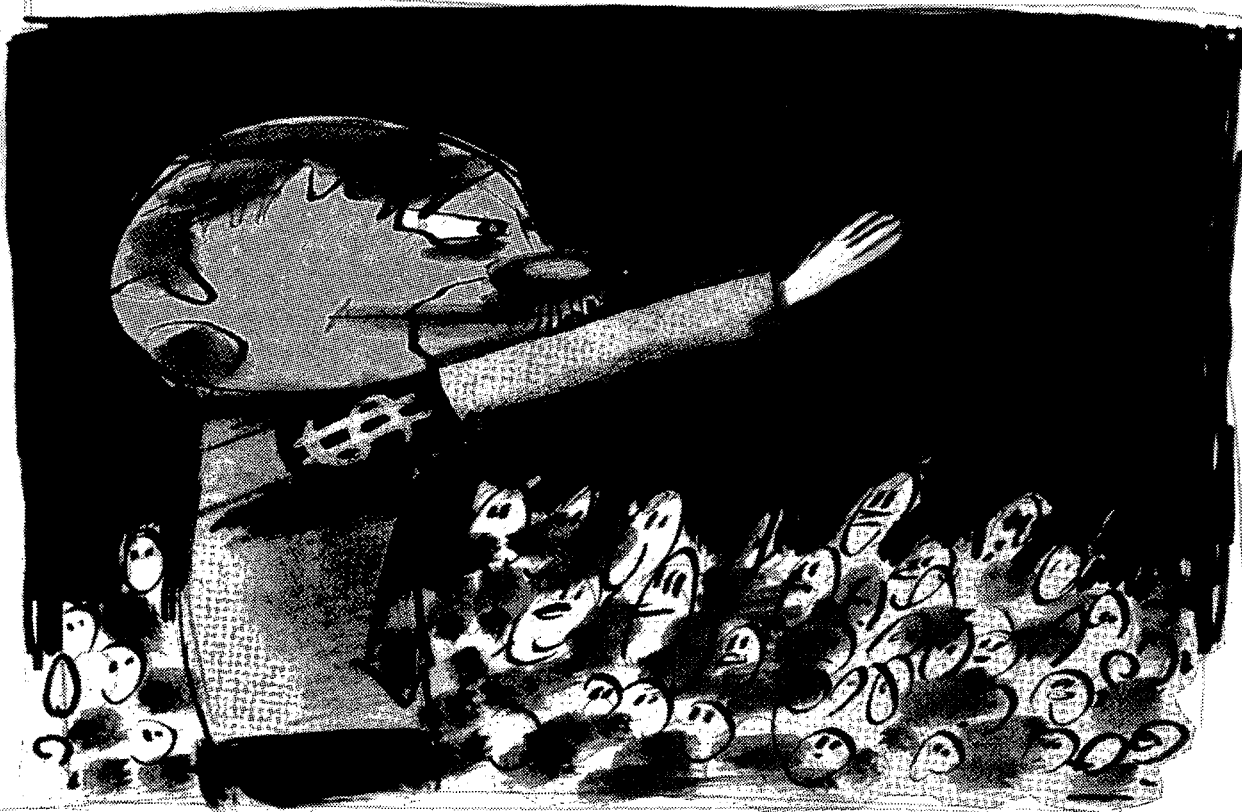
Of course, rising wages everywhere in the world could help create new markets and improve living standards, but the balance of power now favors employers who seek to control or drive down wages. For a while, the demand for new capital goods—stamping presses for "national cars" in Malaysia and Indonesia, skyscrapers in Shanghai, telecommunications systems for Thailand—can compensate for slack consumer demand, but at some point the stagnation threat cannot be avoided. The standard Keynesian solution is to raise the buying power of the world's workers and to increase public investment. But how can that happen on a global scale, especially when the global rentier class—banks, insurance companies, hedge funds and so on, as well as private investors—demands austerity for both workers and the public sector?

While some of the Asian "tiger" economies, from Taiwan to Thailand, are growing fast, economic growth in the most advanced countries and for the world as a whole has stagnated in recent decades. Greider views explicit measures to equalize incomes as essential not only for fairness but also for maximizing the potential output of the global economy. But only at the end of the book does he tackle one of the thorniest problems for both enthusiasts of the new world economy and critics of its inequities: Is rapid economic growth, as now defined, either environmentally sustainable or culturally desirable? Greider is right to insist that we in the rich world cannot simply pull



**One World, Ready or Not:
The Manic Logic of Global
Capitalism**

By William Greider
Simon & Schuster
528 pp., \$27.50



up the drawbridge and deny the benefits of modern technology to the world's poor. But he fails to adequately confront the possibility that the patterns of mass consumption that are fast becoming universal may represent a new form of domination. Still, faced with dilemmas of growth or no growth, the humane choice must be for growth, hopefully redefined and controlled.

Greider's most distinctive contribution—an outgrowth of his work on the Federal Reserve Bank for an earlier book, *Secrets of the Temple*—is his analysis of the role of the global financial markets in the new world economy. The global economy is really a rentier's regime, he argues, buttressed not only by institutions like the World Bank but, at least as importantly, by almost perfectly mobile bonds, currencies and other financial instruments. Even more than the transnational manufacturers, this anonymous market sometimes seems to overwhelm governments and central banks. Yet as the U.S. government bailout of the financial speculators who had flocked to Mexico proves, finance capital still requires government protection against its excesses and stupidities.

The social and political problems posed by this new global economy go beyond poor wages and dismal conditions for exploited workers in countries like Indonesia and China, and the growing inequality within and among countries. Greider raises the specter of a resurgent fascism, resembling the economically successful but repressive authoritarianism common in east Asia. There, state power denies democratic rights and enforces the demands of global capital for low wages and strict control of workers.

Global corporations do not require the abolition or even necessarily the scaling back of national governments; they need infrastructure, law enforcement, social stability and other services only the state can provide. But they do demand that the state primarily serve the interests of corporations and the market. The newly industrializing countries of east Asia can bargain with transnational corporations over trade and investment because in return they can offer cheap, well-disciplined labor forces, growing markets and limited regulation of business. But much as the global capitalists may want the skilled workers and affluent markets of developed countries, they do not want social regulation of business or redistributive welfare states.

Against the pressure of global markets and business, Greider proposes democratizing the global economy with more controls on capital, taxes on wealth, higher wages, protections of worker rights, debt relief and measures to stabilize global finance. In addition to this kind of public regulation of the economy, Greider holds out great (perhaps too great) hope for worker ownership as an alternative to the manic mobility and social irresponsibility of capital.

What Greider cannot describe—partly because they do not yet exist except embryonically—are either the social movements or the new global institutions of economic governance that might implement his ideas. When these appear, as they must, *One World, Ready or Not* will likely prove to be a valued guide to a new world in the making.

David Moberg is researching labor responses to the global economy with support from The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

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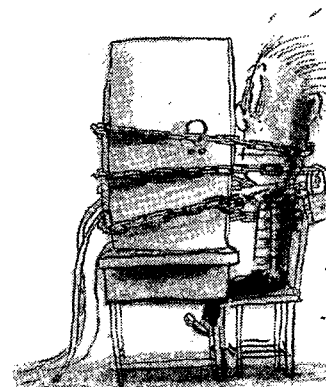
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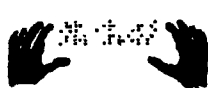
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Continued from page 48

honest and their own, with a vision of things that captures their most secret judgements of the world." You share Holden Caulfield's loathing for phonies; you cheer Franny's rejection of the egotism of her peers and professors; you understand why Seymour pulls the trigger on himself.

Moreover, you become something of a fanatic. There are as many now as there were in the '50s. Last year, the college-student creator of The Holden Server, a Web site that generated random quotes from *Catcher*, responded to the literary representative who sent him a cease-and-desist letter with: "It's an honor to hear from you. I can now say I'm but two degrees of separation from Mr. Salinger." A band called The Wynona Riders (after the actress who confessed her penchant for Salinger in an interview) recently put out a CD called *J.D. Salinger*, the cover of which replicates the design of the familiar maroon *Catcher* paperback.

But for some readers, it's not Holden but the maddeningly elusive Seymour who lies at the center of the Salinger myth.

"Hapworth" is a continuation of Salinger's Glass family tales, which include *Franny and Zooey* and the stories "A Perfect Day for Bananafish" and "Seymour: An Introduction." The Glasses—in descending age, Seymour, Buddy, Waker, Walt, Beatrice (Boo Boo), Zooey and Franny—are brainy siblings who grew up as radio quiz-show stars. Seymour is their spiritual leader, a prodigy who's either a madman or a saint, depending whom you ask.

"Hapworth" is the first story told entirely—aside from a brief introduction by Buddy—in Seymour's voice, in a 20,000-word letter home from summer camp. But how many letters from a 7-year-old's bunk contain observations like, "It is a break for us that we are fairly magnificent, limited athletes; at baseball, perhaps the most heart-rending, delicious sport in the Western Hemisphere, even our worst foes would not deny our unassuming prowess"? Seymour, of course, is not an ordinary child. He's a more fully realized version of the title character of "Teddy" from *Nine Stories*, a wee genius with uncommon conviction regarding God and reincarnation.

"Hapworth" is a departure from Salinger's other stories about Seymour in that the author pushes, and breaks, the bounds of credibility. Seymour's epistle—all 80 *New Yorker* pages of it—is a bizarre, exasperating, stream-of-consciousness effusion, darting at "blissful random," as he puts it, from rhapsodic descriptions of his fellow campers and of Buddy to theological musings, earnest advice to his parents on their health and careers, prurient asides, a reconsideration of John Bunyan, flashes of the future, and thoughts on such minutiae of camp life as getting demerits for a "continuously sloppy bungalow." A quarter of the letter is devoted to his requests for summer reading: Tolstoy, Cervantes, Lao-tse, Proust, the Brontës, Bhakti-Yoga and many, many more.

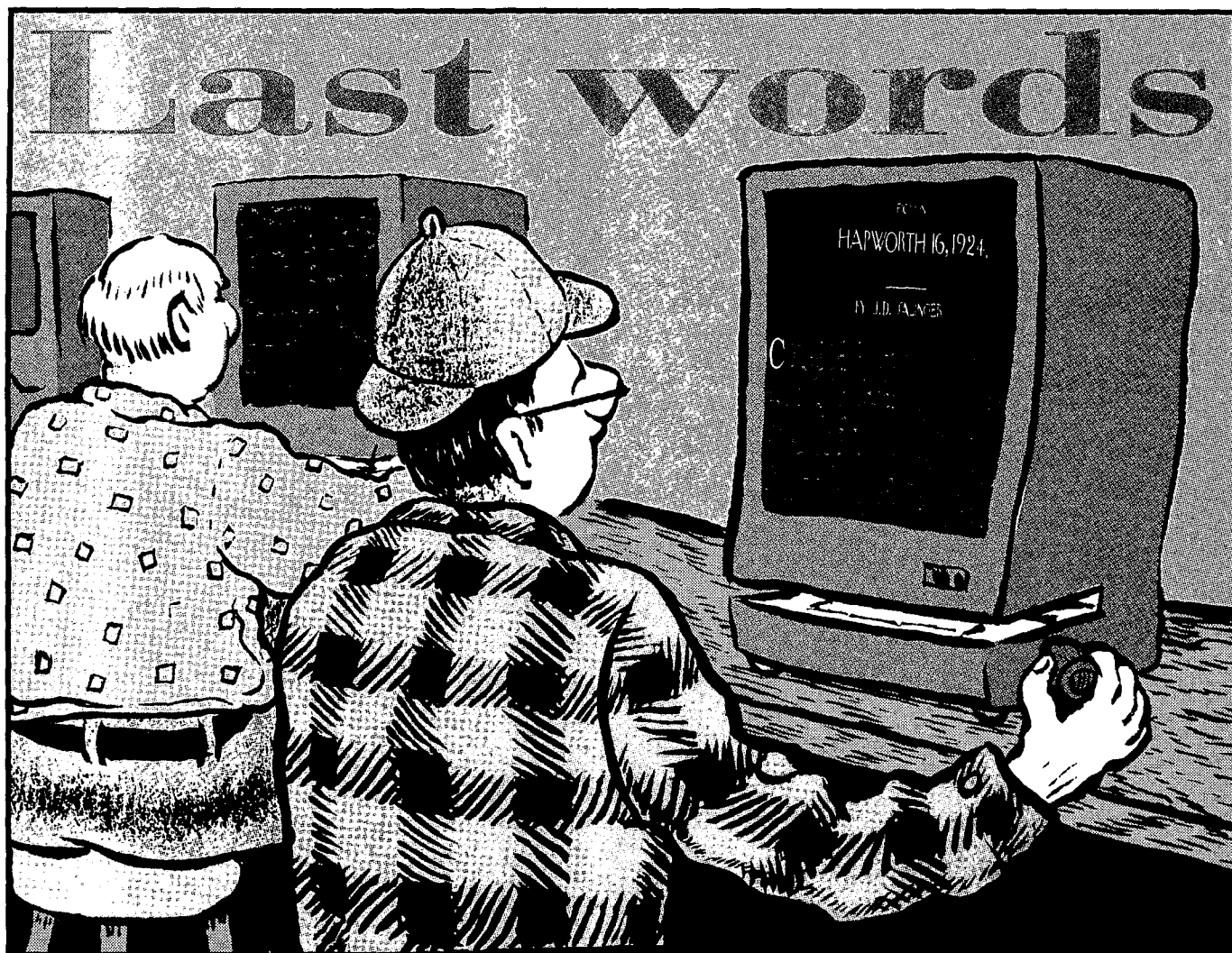
Most troubling, aside from the absurd excess of Seymour's precociousness, is the spooky side of his insight—his refusal of anesthesia for stitches ("I had snapped the communication of pain between the leg and the brain, sheerly for

my own convenience"), his Portnoyesque tributes to the adult women at camp ("It requires all one's powers of self-control to keep from taking her in one's arms when she is strolling about on the grass in one of her tasteful frocks"), his blasé recounting of past lives (or "appearances," as he calls them), and his prescience. He foretells his own suicide and Buddy's future success as a writer, as well as the meeting that will lead to all the Glass children becoming national celebrities. The Seymour previously known to us as a sage, if self-immolating guru is now revealed to be otherworldly as well.

Luckily for the overwhelmed reader, 7-year-old Seymour has the same charming, self-effacing diction as Salinger's previous narrators; even so, "Hapworth" isn't easy going. Stylistically, it's a tour de force—a romp in the haphazard pleasures of language, similar in its digressions to "Seymour: An Introduction," but this time with a raconteur who is writing for an audience for the very first time (or, as Seymour puts it, "snatching this stunning opportunity to use my new and entirely trivial mastery of written construction and decent sentence formation"). He's discovering language, and one senses Salinger's delight in imagining such an occurrence, but one also gets the feeling as the words keep coming that Salinger's breathless prose is finally leaving him exhausted. There's no plot, no tension, just desultory, though masterfully awkward prose, as crude colloquialisms collide into stilted speeches. We find Salinger's wry observations about bourgeois life in Seymour's ramblings, but they have to be dislodged, like pomegranate seeds, from the pulp.

As he does in many of the Glass stories, Salinger anticipates and breezily deflects any criticism. "If you are tired or frankly bored reading a quarter of the way through, stop instantaneously, with my heartfelt permission," Seymour tells his parents and the reader. It's sound advice. The real surprise of "Hapworth" is that Seymour is neither as saintly nor as interesting as the other Glass stories build him up to be. Reading "Hapworth" is like watching Seymour's autopsy—his 7-year-old self splayed out, diagrammed like a sentence. It's not pretty, and it's not even necessary. What is wonderful about Salinger—the comic precision of *Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters*, the pathos of *The Catcher in the Rye*—is missing from this self-indulgent cacophony. Salinger's cheeky prediction of 1961, offered on *Franny and Zooey's* book jacket, appears to have come true: "There is a real-enough danger, I suppose, that sooner or later I'll bog down, perhaps disappear entirely, in my own methods, locutions, and mannerisms."

Of course, Salinger *did* disappear entirely, or almost entirely, after this story was published. That—as well as the story's reissue—makes it irresistible to wonder if "Hapworth" isn't meant as some kind of final statement. Introducing his late brother's letter, Buddy (explicitly Salinger's alter ego) says it foreshadows a story he himself is working on—suggesting there's an important work Salinger is or was writing, one we haven't yet seen. Salinger may have disappeared, but the 13-year-old in me still hopes he'll be back. ◀ Lawrence Levi is an associate editor at *Art & Antiques*.



By Lawrence Levi

One Saturday afternoon in New York City, at the age of 13, I took the subway down to the Mid-Manhattan Library to unearth buried treasure: the uncollected stories of J.D. Salinger. Having gobbled up *The Catcher in the Rye* and his three other books, I was giddy with the discovery that he had 22 stories floating around in back issues of magazines like *The Saturday Evening Post* and *Cosmopolitan*—giddy in a way I hadn't been since I was 8 and heard they were making a sequel to *Star Wars*. I decided to start with the last piece Salinger ever published—"Hapworth 16, 1924," in the June 19, 1965, *New Yorker*—and work my way back. When I got to the stacks, I found, to my utter shock and disillusionment, that the appropriate pages had been torn out—from all the appropriate issues. A sympathetic librarian directed me to the microfilm readers, but when I finally got it on the screen, "Hapworth" was way too long to ingest in the half-hour time limit or to photocopy with my eighth-grade allowance.

This summer, the small Orchises Press in Alexandria,

Va., will quietly bring "Hapworth" (without an author photo or cover art, as Salinger always insists) to bookstore shelves; it's the first new Salinger book in 34 years. Considering the 78-year-old writer's notorious mania for privacy—he's granted just two brief interviews since 1953, and in 1986 blocked publication of a biography that quoted from his letters—and his seeming resolve never to publish again, it's perplexing (and, to fans, titillating) that he would authorize this new volume.

Salinger's works have always had a sort of mystical aura, one that his silence has helped to perpetuate. The aura comes less from his later writings' somewhat fatuous promotion of Zen Buddhism than from his characters. They provoke a powerful sense of identification, and their pronouncements seem intimate and profound. In Salinger, teenage readers find their first adult sympathizer. As Alfred Kazin wrote in *The Atlantic Monthly* in 1961, they "respond to him with a consciousness that he speaks for them and virtually to them, in a language that is peculiarly

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